

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

**Exploring Child Labour: An Examination of Child Trading in
Nigeria**

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A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Anglia Ruskin
University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Submitted: 31st January 2019

Acknowledgement

The privilege of working with children and youths over the years within the university environment and voluntary organizations has served as an impetus in pursuit of this research.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisory team at Anglia Ruskin University for bringing my PhD journey to a successful end through their unconditional support.

I extend my most sincere gratitude to Sarah Burch, my first supervisor, who took over the supervisory role at a very crucial period of my studies. Her encouragement, support and guidance have greatly helped to bring this project to a successful completion. I also extend my gratitude to my second supervisor Adriana Sandu who has been of great support and guidance at this final stage of my thesis.

I am grateful to Allister Butler, my former first supervisor, for his assistance in the formulation of this study. His guidance and support at the early stages of this project will always be profoundly appreciated. I am also very grateful to Ian Pinchen who proofread all the chapters of the thesis and made positive contributions to every chapter.

I sincerely appreciate all the research participants for sharing their knowledge, experiences and insights with me in this study. The information they provided helped in understanding the concepts of child labour in relation to socio-cultural contributions.

I will like to thank my children: Emmanuel (Jr), Peter, Paul and Love for their patience and perseverance throughout this journey, which affected them in so many ways; and their moral support which was a great source of strength for me. The appreciation also goes to my wonderful husband Emmanuel, for his unconditional support throughout this period, both emotionally and financially, without whom, this work would not have been possible.

Finally, I give God the Glory for granting me the strength and the good health to be able to bring this research to a successful completion, despite all the hurdles, hiccups and delays in the journey.

ABSTRACT

**FACULTY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, MEDICINE AND SOCIAL CARE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

EXPLORING CHILD LABOUR: AN EXAMINATION OF CHILD TRADING IN NIGERIA

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January 2019**

Globally, child labour research is a major focus of the academic and policy literature especially in developing continents such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. There is a global perception centred on the socio-economic contributions such as poverty, illiteracy and household status as the reason for its incidence and prevalence. Research on the socio-cultural contributions of child labour involving the decision-making process of parents has been few. This study explores the views and experiences of stakeholders on how socio-cultural values influence parents' decisions in sending their children to trade.

An exploratory methodology, within a constructionist paradigm, informed by instrumental case study approach of a market space as the unit of analysis was employed. Thirty qualitative interviews were undertaken with relevant stakeholders. The interviews include three sets of focus group discussions involving five parents and twelve children; and thirteen in-depth interviews with five children, four parents and four social workers. The investigation considers how cultural values influence the decision-making process of parents in child trading. The study further investigates the impact of child rights law as a preventive measure in child trading.

Thematic analysis was employed in analysing the data. The themes were based on three layers of analysis: children's experiences and participation in trading, family dynamics and interactions; and policy context on child trading. Findings revealed that child trading is an occupational 'shift' that children navigate as a pathway to other employments.

Improved understanding of the cultural norms involved in the decision-making process of parents in relation to child trading and government provision of inclusive support to parents in the form of sensitisation and financial assistance to boost the economic stability of households are found to aid in the implementation of policies and practices that will reduce child labour activity in the Nigerian community.

Original theoretical and methodological contributions to knowledge are presented and discussed.

Key words: *Child trading, child rights, cultural values, decision-making, children, parents*

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ACRONYMS

ACERWC: African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACRWC: African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACPF: African Child Policy Forum
ANPPCAN: African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
BLP: Better Life Programme
BLPRW: Better Life Programme for Rural Women
CFI: Child Friendliness Index
CRA: Child Rights Act
CRIN: Child Rights International Network
CYPA: Children and Young Person's Act
DFRRI: Directorates of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructures
FEAP: Family Economic Advancement Programme
FOS: Federal Office of Statistics
FSP: Family Support Programme
ILO: International Labour Organization
IPEC: International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
LEAP: Literacy Enhancement Assistance Program
MOLP: Ministries of Labour and Productivity
NAPTIP: National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters
NAPEP: National Poverty Eradication Programme
NBS: National Bureau of Statistics
NDE: National Directorate of Employment
NLA: Nigerian Labour Acts
NPE: Nigerian Pidgin English
NPHC: National Population and Housing Census
PAP: Poverty Alleviation Programme
UCW: Understanding Children's Work
UNCRC: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Funds
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
USDL: United States Department of Labour

USDOLBILA: United States Department of Labour Bureau of International Labour
Affairs
SIMPOC: Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research is on child labour and is centred specifically on children who trade in a market space in Nigeria. The study uses Oba market, Benin City, as a case study, raising questions concerning the tension between a family economy and the rights of a child to childhood as defined by the International Labour Organisation.

The chapter presents the context and rationale for the research in relation to the historical perception of the determinants of child labour. I also describe the demographic location where the research is based. My personal motivations for conducting the study are also presented and I complete this chapter with a brief overview of each of the seven chapters of the thesis.

1.2 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

Research on child labour spans several decades, raising global concerns about its incidence and prevalence in the international world where there is a growing debate distinguishing children's work from child labour (Ennew, Myers, and Plateau, 2005; Abebe, 2009; Okyere, 2012). Most of the research on child labour has been concerned with the socio-economic factors that contribute to its incidence and prevalence (Bass, 2004; Edmonds, 2005; Hartjen and Priyadarsini, 2012). These concerns about the economic activities that children carry out are expressed by both individuals and local, international and non-governmental organisations, even as development increases across the globe through new trade initiatives (ILO, 2002, 2011; Strakova and Vondra, 2008; Bahar, 2014). Despite different attempts being made by various developing continents including Africa, Asia and Latin America, to reduce the phenomenon, child labour persists in many countries of the global south¹ (Togunde and Carter, 2008; Bahar 2014). Several key factors that include poverty, low socio-economic status, cultural and religious practices, deficiencies in the enforcement of labour restrictions and inconsistent anti-child labour legislation are described by various scholars as the reasons for the upsurge and pervasiveness of child labourers (Bass, 2004;

¹Also referred to as Third World Countries or the Developing Countries of the world, which include Africa, some part of Asia and Latin America.

Hilson, 2010; Okafor, 2010; Nafees, Khan, Fatmi, and Aslam 2012; Azhar, 2015; Agu, 2015). However, some scholars have emphasised poverty and cultural trends as the most common causes of child labour (Ike and Twumasi- Ankrah, 1999; Brown, 2012).

Studies have revealed that there is an interactional relationship between how policy makers and societies in the global north² conceive of social problems; both influence the other and mutually shape the direction of social policies (Yeates, 2002). Understanding how people conceptualise a problem is a key determinant in knowing how to implement policies that will address the problem. While a realistic, workable and enforceable solution is being developed, it is imperative to understand that acknowledging the interplay of policy makers and society in shaping policy should be the drive for its acceptance and use (Ike and Twumasi-Ankrah, 1999; Brown, 2012).

Child labour research is a major focus of the academic and policy literature (see, for example, Aliyu, 2006; Amao and Oni, 2012; Agu, 2015; Agbo, 2017) in African countries such as Nigeria and Ghana; but in the specific context of children trading in market spaces, research is limited. Additionally, research on child labour recognises the relevance of understanding its socio-cultural contribution to the structure and function of households within African society (Cohen, 2001; Sim and Hoiland-Carlsen, 2009). The aim of this study, by examining the market activities of children in one community in Nigeria, is to add to the stock of knowledge about the socio-cultural determinants of child labour in the context of child trading within a market space. Currently there is limited research into an understanding of this area. In doing this, the study also adds to the discourse on children's rights, explores current levels of awareness concerning child labour in African societies, and examines how such rights are socially constructed.

The research uses a case study approach and the following section describes the location of this research, i.e. Oba market, which is the unit of analysis.

1.3 MARKET DEMOGRAPHY

This study is situated in a market space, Oba market, in Benin City which is located in Edo

²Also referred to as the economically developed countries of the world which include Europe, North America, Australia and Israel.

State, in the southern part of one of the 36 states of Nigeria (Eseigbe and Ojeifor, 2012). The state has a total landmass of about 17,802sq km, a population of 3,497,502 and 18 Local Government Areas (National Population and Housing Census (NPHC), 2006). Benin City has the dual position of being the capital of Edo State and the headquarters of one of the local government areas (Oredo Local Government Area) in the state. Oba market as the unit of analysis has been selected due to the heterogeneous nature and strategic position of both the market and the city. The market is the oldest, largest and busiest in Edo State and is situated in the city centre which makes it easily accessible to both workers and customers in the community (Okaka, Adejumo, Ojeh-Oziegbe, Olokor, and Iyawe, 2013). Benin City is positioned geographically for movement across the different regions in the country.

Figure 1 below is a map of Nigeria illustrating the location of Edo State. Figure 2 is a map of Edo State showing the location of the 18 local government areas in the state, including Oredo Local Government where Oba market is located. Oba market is a well-known and unique market because its name is derived from the royal head of the city, the king or the 'Oba'. The Oba is the head of the ancient Benin kingdom and still leads the people on the basis of traditional cultural practices. The market operates every day of the week whereas other markets have only selected days of operation. Due to its size and the daily activities that take place there, more children are involved in trading in Oba market than in any other market in that city (Eseigbe and Ojeifor, 2012; Okaka et al., 2013). Moreover, the location of the market, near important and significant organisations and offices in the city, makes it a very busy commercial area. Examples of such offices and organisations include The Office of the Governor of the State, The Office of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, The Local Government Office and the House of Assembly building.

Another unique structure near the market is the new central hospital, the largest in Edo State. It is estimated that more than 5,000 people, mostly women and children, are involved in trading activities within the market on daily basis (Eseigbe and Ojeifor, 2012; Okaka et al. 2013).

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria Showing Edo State



Figure 2: Map of Edo State



1.4 RESEARCHER'S POSITIONALITY

My interest in the economic activities of children developed through the experience I had as a child assisting my mother in trading. Although my mother was a single parent, she was relatively a very successful business woman with social status, which at that period was regarded as normal. She had that culturally embedded idea held by the majority of parents in Nigeria, that involving one's children in economic activities helps to prepare the child to grow from a responsible child to a responsible adult (Ebigbo, 2003; Buriel, 2012). Such children are expected to develop mutual care and support for their immediate and extended family members. As I became an adult, I realised that almost every child at that time was involved in one form of economic activity or another, to support their family.

All the professional roles I have had since I obtained my diploma certificate in social work, in 1995, have involved children and youths in an educational setting. Thus, the passion to speak to children about their perceptions of trading has remained both a personal and a professional interest. My undergraduate degree project, in 2003, which was centred on the coping strategy of visually impaired children in a primary school setting, propelled me towards an increasing interest in the overall welfare of children. This laid the foundation for my MSc dissertation on *'The socialisation of the growing child in the market environment'*. The project was based on children's perception and understanding of their interaction with peers and other individuals within the environment where they trade and how they are able to cope with the trading activity that they do.

Through all my years of working in a university environment within a large community as a social worker cum youth counsellor, I have come to acknowledge the importance of identifying problems and working out solutions through sharing information and taking decisions through listening to children and adults. There is a need for policy makers and their practitioners to prioritise children and their family needs especially in the interests of the children within the community. The research, therefore, focuses on children, parents and social workers' perspectives on how cultural values identified within the community contribute to the trading activities that children do, especially in relation to the decision-making process of parents and the economic circumstances within which they are located.

The research discusses the lives of children with a focus on their economic contribution to households motivated by the traditional cultural values of assistance, obedience, respect and responsibility that are inherent within the community. The research illuminates the socio-cultural context in which children are involved in child trading activity and explores how child labour affects their wider childhood experience. The research also discusses the policies and regulations addressing the rights of children, which are used as a trajectory in combating the incidence and prevalence of child labour, especially in a developing country like Nigeria.

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 Aim

To explore, from the different perspectives of parents, children and social workers, the ideas about how socio-cultural values influence parents' decisions in sending their children to trade and how the trading activity affects the lives of these children.

1.5.2 Objectives

The study had the following objectives:

1. To explore how socio-cultural values influence parents' decisions in sending their children to trade.
2. To investigate how trading activities have affected the lives of children who trade.
3. To establish the degree of awareness of children's rights, by both parents and their children.
4. To identify ways in which intervention policies on child labour can be implemented.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study operationalised the aims and objectives by formulating the following questions:

1. How have socio-cultural values influenced parents' decision-making processes in sending their children to trade? The research question explores

the socio-cultural values of child labour in relation to child trading as an influence in the decision-making process of parents towards their children.

2. What effect has this trading activity had on the children? The question seeks to understand how the trading activity that children engage in affects their lives, both on a day-to-day basis and in the longer term.

3. How has the degree of awareness of the child rights by both children and parents impacted on child labour/trading? This question seeks to understand the degree of awareness of children's rights among parents and their children and the impact such (lack of) awareness has.

1.7 THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis is presented in seven chapters. The current chapter has laid out the basis for the research. It is followed by the literature review, which is divided into two chapters, chapters two and three.

In chapter two I present the definition of the child and his/her vulnerability. I also discuss the context of debates about childhood and its definition, highlighting the intellectual debates on childhood and the historical and current understanding of childhood. The principles and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are also presented, where the antecedent of the child rights promulgation is analysed. The chapter concludes with discussions on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the understanding of the rights of children in Nigeria.

In chapter three I present a review of child labour. I discuss the incidence and the prevalence of child labour, focusing on Nigeria. I explore the concept, definition and the categorisation of child labour. I also discuss, in detail, the understanding of child labour in Nigeria, highlighting efforts made to eliminate it and the socio-cultural determinants which seek to preserve it.

In chapter four I present the philosophical underpinnings for the research, discussing the methodological considerations and highlighting the ethics and value base pertinent to the study. I argue that a qualitative case study framework, rooted in the philosophy of social construction, is a fruitful and valid approach in gathering information about the socio-cultural determinants and contribution of child labour. This is because it is inclusive of other stakeholders relevant in the research process and creates the opportunity to listen to the

voices of those involved in the practice. Within this paradigm, data was collected using a case study approach.

In chapter five I present the findings from the data analysis drawing on the perceptions of the different persons: parents, children and social workers, who participated in the study. The research questions are used to frame the findings around the views of all the participants on child labour and child rights. These findings highlight the disparities, not only between children and adults in terms of how child trading activity is conceptualised and experienced, but also how the rights of children are perceived by them.

In chapter six I present a critical discussion of the key findings of the research, highlighting the nuanced reasons behind parents' decisions to send their children to trade.

In chapter seven I conclude the thesis summarising the core contributions to knowledge, discussing the limitations of the study, the implication of the findings for social work practice and directions for future research. I also identify the original contribution to knowledge emerging from this study.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the concepts of child, childhood and child rights through the policies in place. It focuses on the relevant changes created by the multiple constructions of child labour,³ each of which includes a definition of the child and a perception of childhood. It is important to have the knowledge and understanding of childhood, drawing on the definitions and policies that have been generated in relation to the child. This will contribute to understanding the conception of childhood and child labour in the decision-making process of parents who send their children to trade. The chapter also explores the principles and implementation of the rights of the child in relation to global policies and laws/legislation. The chapter ends by presenting the rationale for the study.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION ON THE CHILD, CHILDHOOD AND CHILD RIGHTS

There is no one definition of a child; rather, there are competing definitions, from different perspectives. The United Nations (UN) definition of the child and childhood is dominated by a ‘developed world’ perspective and this can create dilemmas for less developed countries such as Nigeria. Exploring a ‘developed nation’ perspective on child and childhood is useful when researching on the perception from a developing country. This will provide a vivid demonstration of the socially constructed nature of childhood and its relationship to the community under study.

A child is defined by the UN as any individual who is below 18 years of age, except where the majority age is set by the country that is signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). The UN convention monitoring body, The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has encouraged different nation states to review their children’s age if it is less than 18 years; and increased protection of children below 18 years is being requested where countries are seen to fall short by the monitoring

³ There are various forms of child labour; child trading is one of them. For the purpose of this study, child labour is also referred to as child trading which also means hawking and vending and is interchangeable. See Table 2 in section 3.7.4.

body. In this definition, distinctions are not made between the different categories of children, for example, babies, toddlers, teenagers or young persons. However, in most communities, distinctions are made between babies and toddlers at one end; and teenagers and young persons at the other (James and James, 2008).

In British law, under section 105 of the Children Act 1989, a child is defined as an individual or a person below 18 years of age, while in the Children and Young Persons Act 1969, under Section 70 of the criminal law, a young person is defined as an individual between 14 and 18 years of age. Prior to the 1969 definition of a 'young person', the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, which is still in use today, stated that, for legal purposes, a 'child' became a 'young person' at age 14. In the same act under section 50 a child becomes criminally responsible at the age of 10.

In defining the child, James and James (2012) explained that:

‘A child is a human being in the early stages of its life-course, biologically, psychologically and socially; it is a member of a generation referred to collectively by adults as ‘children’, who together temporarily occupy the social space that is created for them by adults and referred to as ‘childhood’ (p. 8).

James and James (2008) explained that there is a gradual, evolving process in the development of children physically, mentally, psychologically and socially compared to adults. Peters and Johansson (2012) suggest that the way adults live, think, talk and treat children reveals what a child is and what a child means to adults. It is further suggested that how adults approach dealing with children's issues is not sensitive to how they (adults) live with their children and how their interactions affect their children's understanding (Peter and Johansson, 2012). This affects children's opportunities to express themselves when interacting with adults. When less attention is directed to those interactions, researchers become less sensitive to how children are able to construct and express themselves in those interactions (Peters and Johansson, 2012). This can reduce children's contributions to issues that concern them as they may become silenced instead of being liberated in their opinions. Children are considered unable to make decisions as they are seen as incompetent and needing to be protected as they grow to adulthood (Uprichard, 2008). James (2017) explained that 'the child' as used in literature and government policies is misleading, but

also reveals the misuse of the concept of childhood and the attitudes towards it. The child is often used to represent an entire group of people – children.

In Nigeria, under section 274 of the Nigerian Child Rights Acts (CRA, 2003), and in line with the definition of a child in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 2001), a child is defined as a person or an individual below the age of 18 years. Prior to this act, the Nigerian Labour Act 1974 defined a child as a person below the age of 15 years, while the National Child Welfare Policy (NCWP, 1989) defined a child as a person that is of or below 12 years of age. In section 2 of the Children and Young Persons Law of Lagos State (1973), a child is defined as a person below 14 years of age and in the same section, a young person is defined as someone who is between 14 and 17 years of age. However, in Edo state, a simplified version of the Child Rights Act which adopts all the principles including the definition of the child was introduced in 2014. The Child Rights Law which was made more simplified than the previous one to create more understanding for the children, was also launched by the current Edo state government in 2017. This incorporates the UN definition of a child adopted by the state and forms part of the state government efforts to protect the overall wellbeing of Edo children and uphold a safe childhood.

The definition of childhood in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is emphasised by UNICEF (2005, p. 3), states that childhood is a *'separate and safe space that is demarcated from adulthood'*, where a child is given the opportunity to grow, play and develop adequately. The report from UNICEF contends that childhood is not just the space between a child's birth and his/her growth to adulthood, but rather refers to the conditions and quality of those years in a child's life before the attainment of adulthood. It also reiterates that children kidnapped and forced into handling arms (such as child soldiers), those who are sexually enslaved and economically exploited, those who are impoverished with no adequate food, no safe or clean water, no good sanitation facilities, nor shelter, and children that have no access to education, are denied their childhood (UNICEF, 2005).

The introduction of UNCRC (1989) helped in changing the dominant perception of childhood and brings about innovative ideas in relation to the rights and interests of children

in various parts of the world (Karp, 2008, cited in Smith, 2011). Critics of UNCRC about its rights-based approach in advancing the interests of children in different areas and from a range of positions within the political, philosophical and ideological spectrum, often challenge the rights of adults (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014). These include parents, especially in terms of work such as child trading that children are expected to undertake.

Despite intellectual debates on childhood definitions and the differences between cultures on what is expected from children, there is a significant level of common understanding and consensus where childhood is viewed as a separate and safe place (UNICEF, 2005). Yet some researchers maintain that childhood is conceptualised in the western world as a period when children are focused only on school and play, a time when their parents provide for them and shield them from the adult world of work; while in the developing world, work is included in the lives of children as they grow (Okoli and Cree, 2012; Aramide, 2013).

Until recently, children generally were not considered as capable of influencing the development of theory with their voices (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014). However, an environment to develop the voice of children was supported by UNCRC (1989) with a focus upon listening to children's views and giving them the right to express themselves. This has motivated scholars to explore children's lives by letting children reflect on their childhood experiences. It has resulted in using research methodologies that are inclusive and are disseminated through a more social democratic framework that encourages children to be active participants (James, 2011). This is a shift from the idea of a passive child that needs to go through objective developmental stages to avoid problematic development to a child who is viewed as active in interpreting his/her life, making choices and influencing outcomes. Children are therefore not to be considered only as a subject of childhood study, but relevant contributors to global childhood studies (Cisneros and Neumann, 2009).

Moules (2005); Gutierrez and Lewis (2005) explained that in contemporary western research, children's voices are included in studies that concern them, unlike in the past where children's voices have often been silenced in research (Smith, 2011). The latter is still conventional in the developing countries where the voices of children are represented less in research that concerns them. Smith (2011) argued that although in the developed countries there has been a large body of research on children (where children have not been

ignored), the main method of researching the experiences of children, nevertheless, was from the position of looking down. This perspective sees childhood from an adult and matured point of view, where the best interest of the child is not considered.

Childhood can be studied in a more contextualised way by allowing children to function in a more participatory way, as an alternative approach to childhood studies and children's rights. Deaton (2018) suggests that the key to understanding the responsibilities laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child is to recognise the right of every child to participate in his or her social, cultural, economic and political environment, in the way that other social actors have the right to do. When the voices and the opinions of children are recognised, there can be a dialogue that will begin to bridge the gap between children and adults. Odukoya (2009) argued that the gap could be in terms of the socio-cultural dynamic of childhood that places children in a position of dependency and vulnerability within the micro-social environment, particularly the family. Odukoya (2009) explained that relationships between family members, especially parent/child relationships, are crucial in analysing the experiences of children in economic activities. Smith (2011) argued that highly structured instruments such as standardised tests and questionnaires are used to measure these experiences through the performance or behaviour of children. These are utilised with research questions and hypotheses presented by researchers to adults whose dominance and control are privileged through a power imbalance and abstract generalisations. These are substituted for empirical studies of children in their everyday environments (Smith, 2011). This is relevant in the literature on child trading activity, as the rights of children are often not considered when children are sent to trade.

Twum-Danso (2016) explained that much of the research literature on childhood and children's lives in Sub-Saharan Africa has been centred on marginalised childhood or children living in disadvantaged conditions. She argued that some researchers such as Ansell and Van Blerk (2004), Bordonaro (2011), Spittler and Bourdillon (2012) and Shepler (2014) have contributed to depicting childhood in Africa in a negative and damaging form. She suggested that there is need for researchers to move beyond focusing mainly on childhood that is characterised by pessimistic views about what children lack towards a holistic approach that is also illustrated by children who are not experiencing difficult or challenging conditions. She further explained that critiques such as those of Panter-Brick

(2002) and Ansell (2015) argued against researchers who focus their research on particular groups of marginalised or disadvantaged children, for example, street children, orphans and those infected by HIV/AIDS, while they limit and divert attention from a wider spectrum of issues such as poverty. However, she argued that such researchers' attention was still focused on a deficit model of childhood (Twum-Danso, 2016). While continued attention on poverty is important, it is also relevant for attention to be given to other nuanced factors, such as socio-cultural factors that are contributing to child labour, which may have deprived children of their childhood and basic rights in society. Therefore, when defining the child and childhood, Lee (2001); James and James (2008) argued that the socio-cultural context, practice and criteria for development should be considered.

2.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF THE CHILD AND OF CHILDHOOD

Traditional theorists have primarily viewed childhood as a preparation for adulthood, where children are only considered in terms of what they will become in future (Walkerdine, 2004; Uprichard, 2008). Some scholars have argued that until recently the current ideas of childhood being a separate and safe space that is demarcated from adulthood simply did not exist (Áries, 1962, cited by Cunningham, 1998). It was thought that the concept of childhood did not exist in the past and recent ideas about childhood would not have made sense then (Lieten, 2011; Clark, 2011). This view is strongly associated with French author Philippe Áries who first studied the history and the concept of childhood, focusing mainly on France. Cunningham argued that, like other researchers on childhood, Áries' unfriendly family-bound experience of childhood drew him to the topic. Áries traced how family and school became centred on children and how the children became excluded from the world of adults who were non-family (Cunningham, 1998). Young people became independent of protection from their family and were introduced into a wider society of adults, where they acted as young adults with the same rights, duties and skills as adults (Áries, 1962, cited by Cunningham, 1998). This description of childhood, which is shaped by the family and educational experience, raises questions about its historical, cultural and social nature (James and James, 2008; Graham, 2011; Peters and Johansson, 2012). Áries' work gave room for childhood to be understood as a distinct and separate stage of life course and framed research development and professional paradigms of childhood (Graham, 2011). Adulthood and the world of childhood slowly became demarcated during the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries to the present day, where seven is the age that is specially marked for a gradual transition to childhood from infancy and 18 to adulthood from childhood.(Clark, 2011).

All children across the world share commonalities due to their biological age, which distinguishes them from adults and affects their level of communication and activity, including their relative power and self-determination as compared to adults (Valentine, 2003). Valentine (2003) argues that childhood is viewed as a period of innocence where children are free from adults' responsibilities, which is an idealised view. Much theoretical analysis of childhood has been centred on child development and education that draws on psychoanalytic and behavioural perspectives and learning theory (Kourkoutas and Xavier, 2010).

Childhood studies acknowledge children's agency, emphasising that children are not empty vessels who are biologically or psychologically dependent or naturally homogeneous within societies (Merewether and Fleet, 2014). Rather, childhood is socially constructed because there are no common norms as to what childhood experiences are, what they should be, or what is the beginning and end of childhood (James, Jenks, and Prout, 1998; James and James, 2008; Smith, 2011). Smith (2011) argued that the construction of childhood itself has important implications for what researchers do. Smith (2011) further argued that the settings and practices of early childhood are culturally constructed and facilitated by different systems of belief about the right way to ensure children's development and how they can be cared for. Axelby and Crewe (2013) conceptualise a childhood that varies within and between cultures (trans-cultural) and across generations (trans-historical), especially in relation to age. In contemporary times compared to historical childhood, children have fewer responsibilities, they play and do not work, they attend school and do not do paid jobs and they consume instead of produce (Montgomery, 2013). However, this is common among the developed countries of the world, in contrast to the developing countries where children's everyday living is still similar to historical childhood. Due to this historical based perception of childhood especially within African continents, which is similar to their cultural practices, children are involved in child labour.

Recognising childhood as a separate and safe space informs the United Nations that even when children may be in the same circumstances as adults, different solutions may be required for the children (UNICEF, 2005). The UNCRC (1989) recognises the unique care and support that children need and acknowledges that what may be suitable for adults may not necessarily be suitable for a child. For example, in Brazil, theoretical shifts about childhood as a phenomenon that is socially constructed have influenced intervention in the children's rights role through encouraging children's participation in issues that concern them (Rizzini and Klees, 2000). This has played a significant role in changing attitudes towards child labour, creating alternatives to the cultural ideas of work as a virtue and maintaining children's rights. It changed the meaning of child labour from being considered as a virtue to constituting a violation of children's rights (Gamlin and Pastor, 2009). This is contrary to most African states where decisions are still taken by adults without children's contribution to issues that concern them.

In Nigeria, the context in which a child is defined varies widely due to the different cultural systems which prevail among the various social groups (Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba, 2010). The context could be social, biological and/or traditional, all of which interplay in the life of the Nigerian child depending on the state or region the child and his/her family are from (Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba, 2010). The multiple and complex conceptualisation of a child, especially in the context of Nigeria, affects how legislative rules are implemented in relation to children's rights and the work that the children do. These rights include the right to education and to play and the right to receive protection from the labour market, early marriage and the right to participate on issues that concern them.

Cultural disparities in the Nigerian socio-cultural system have affected the implementation of the CRC and ACRWC, even though they have been adopted as CRA (2003). This is because the CRA is not recognised until each state within the country passes it into law (Ogunniran, 2010). As a result, it is not enforceable across the country, because laws between the federal government and regional states vary and are not compatible with the CRC. For those Nigerian states that are yet to sign the CRA, it leaves children in a state of vulnerability (Braimah, 2014). For example, the minimum marriageable age for an individual in the CRA is 18 years, while the legislation on issues concerning children in Nigeria is in the residual legislative list and as such depends on the states. Individual states

are meant to adopt and adapt the Child Rights Act, and most of the states have adopted the Act. However, in the process of adapting the Act, changes have been made to the definition of a child by some of these states. In some states, a child is defined as a young person of less than thirteen years, while in other states like Akwa Ibom, a child is a young person that is less than sixteen years of age. In Edo state, the definition in the simplified version of the child rights act is adopted which is the same as the UN definition. In Nigeria the perception of age in the definition of a child varies according to different cultural backgrounds, which may depend on the ability of the child to perform certain type of work (Iguh and Nosike, 2011).

In some Nigerian communities, a boy develops into adulthood when he is initiated into a group of age grades⁴ or he is physically and/or financially able to contribute to the development of the community (Anyia and Okagbue, 1995). Although there is no certainty over a common age for puberty under Nigerian common law, the age of puberty for a boy is 14 years, while for a girl, it is 12 years (Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba, 2010). Furthermore, under Nigerian customary law⁵, the minimum age for puberty is not fixed. However, in some communities, it is believed that childhood ends at puberty (Weimann, 2009; Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba, 2010). This can be, for example, the age when the girl child starts menstruation, which differs among girls.

In the northern part of the country, within the Hausa culture and traditions, it is common for girls as young as 12 years old to be married off (Brammah, 2014). Additionally, in some states such as Jigawa in northern Nigeria, marriageable age is set as young as puberty (Weimann, 2009; CRIN, 2011), at which point the child is viewed as adult. Furthermore, a child that commits an offence is not treated differently from an adult, irrespective of the child's age and/or vulnerability (Ogunniran, 2010). This section illustrates the local understanding that childhood and adulthood do not necessarily convey the definitions of childhood, rather the understanding relates to the idea of what children and adults should do and shows that the legal understanding of childhood is not having as much impact as expected.

⁴ No age specification in age grades.

⁵ This is the law that is followed according to the traditions of the people, which is enshrined in the Nigeria constitution.

2.4 THE VULNERABILITY OF THE CHILD

Children's participation in hazardous and risky work makes them more vulnerable than adults especially in some certain types of work, for example the use of machinery and load carrying in industries (Ritchie, 2012) and child trading within the streets and markets in the community (Umar, 2009). Much research on child labour in relation to child trading discusses little about the type of work that children do, how such work undermines the rights and safety of the child, and how vulnerable children could be as they work. Although there is general agreement that children are vulnerable, how this vulnerability is addressed depends on the economic, political, social and cultural realities of the community or country (Deaton, 2018).

Every country, both developed and developing, has a future linked to children's status and the conditions within which children live. In assessing the conditions and the vulnerability of children, various factors trigger problems. Chaudhary, Vasabhai, and Bhagyalaxmi (2014) have explained that these could be physical, behavioural or social. Children need protection and guidance against these factors because they are among the most vulnerable and powerless within the society (Bamgbose, 2014). Moreover, they need to be gently handled and given special attention to protect and promote their interests, rights and welfare (Okonkwo, 1997).

Daniel (2010) maintains that children are vulnerable especially when they are very young because their size and fragility makes them unable to protect themselves from others. Due to that vulnerability, children are at risk of harm, mistreatment, exploitation and/or neglect if they are not sufficiently cared for and protected by adults (Chaudhary, Vasabhai, and Bhagyalaxmi, 2014; Bamgbose, 2014). Additionally, children are usually unable fully to appreciate their own vulnerability, which puts them at greater risk of harm (Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun, 2014). However, Cisneros and Neumann (2009) argue that vulnerable children understand their environments and are able to participate (if given the opportunity) in finding solutions to their problems.

Every child is entitled to a life that is free from fear, harm and neglect. For a child's future to be positive there is need for him/her to have a healthy body, mind and spirit. This can be achieved only if the needs of the child are physically, psychologically and emotionally

addressed (Bhanje and Halli, 2012). Bhanje and Halli (2012) observe that if the needs of a child are addressed, the child becomes medically sound, protected and develops into a responsible adult who is productive in society. They further explain that children are always in need of nurturing and protection, so that they can have healthy growth and develop adequately. The responsibility of providing for the child's needs lies mostly with the parents and these are understood as the rights of the child (Bhanje and Halli, 2012). Minimising the possibility of children being exposed to harm requires safe practices to be adopted by adults. Umar (2009) suggests these include discouraging parents from involving their children in any form of trading activities.

Every child has the right not to be forced to do anything against their will and every child has the right to protection against any harm. In Britain, the Children Act 1989 states that the child is to be protected against any significant harm where this is defined as '*the ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development*' (Section 31:9b). The concept of 'significant harm' is introduced in the Act as the '*limit that justifies compulsory intervention into family life to protect the child's safety and wellbeing*'. However, in the Nigerian context significant harm is not specified, rather the best interest of the child is emphasised in relation to the overall wellbeing of the child (CRA, 2003).

Major research on children's vulnerability is mostly directed towards children orphaned through AIDS/HIV pandemics especially in Sub-Saharan Africa which has the highest number of AIDS/HIV afflicted children (Abebe, 2005; Chitiyo, Changarab, and Chitiyo, 2008). There has been a dearth on other areas such as child labour in the context of trading. Vulnerability, risk and resilience have become significant in efforts made towards rationalising child development approaches (Kendall, 2008; Daniel, 2010). When a child lives under difficult conditions, the developmental potential of that child is interrupted or delayed. Furthermore, there are challenges in recovering such potential in later years (Tagurum, Chirdan, Bello, Afolaranmi, Hassan, Iyaji, and Idoko, 2015). Among other things children need to have adequate nutrition, care and be well protected from harm so that they can have a safe and healthy childhood (Bhanje and Halli, 2012; Tagurum et al., 2015). Chaudhary et al. (2014) suggest that for the safety and wellbeing of the child, better and firmer laws should be considered and enforced concerning child labour issues, since child labour (child trading) constitutes a breach in protection rights. A child has a right to

his/her welfare and happiness that is part of a safe childhood which reflects a valued social status in families and society (Akwara et al., 2010). The next section discusses concepts and definitions of childhood.

2.5 THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: ORIGIN AND IMPLEMENTATION

One of the foremost statements on the relevance of extending special care to children was the Declaration of the Rights of The Child, published in Geneva, by the International Save the Children Union, in 1923 and endorsed by the League of Nations General in 1924. It recognised and affirmed, for the first time, the existence of specific rights for children and adults' responsibility towards them. These included five main principles:

1. The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually.
2. The child that is hungry must be fed, the child that is sick must be nursed, the child that is backward must be helped, the delinquent child must be reclaimed, and the orphan and the waif must be sheltered and succoured.
3. The child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress.
4. The child must be put in a position to earn a livelihood and must be protected against every form of exploitation.
5. The child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow men.

Reference was made within a human rights document for the first time to the importance of prioritising the welfare of children and protecting them from economic exploitation. However, this principle did not bring about the acceptance of children as independent individuals. The 1924 declaration was followed by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 in which principle 9 of the declaration emphasised children's rights and protection against neglect, abuse and exploitation. This required that children not be employed earlier than the specified minimum age and not be engaged in any work that may be detrimental to their health or education, or interfere with their overall development (Gallinetti, 2007). The overall wellbeing of children was always to be the first consideration, recognising their rights to develop, to be assisted and for their rights to be protected (Agbo, 2017). The aim of the declaration was to promote the basic rights of

children and to establish adults' responsibilities towards them (Lurie and Tjelflaat, 2012). However, these aims were not intended to create obligations that were binding on states or made to be enforced by international law; rather, they were principles that different countries were expected to follow. According to Kaime (2009), the 1959 Declaration was problematic in that it placed the onus on adults (parents/family) to ensure that children were given what they needed, rather than children having their own specific rights in the way that adults do. This shortcoming is important because it sets the basis for the most current development of the framework for children's rights.

These earliest elaborations of a children's rights framework led to the three important international conventions that specifically recognised child labour issues: The International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 138 of 1973, which emphasised a minimum age for work; the UNCRC of 1989, where the rights of children were made explicit for all; and ILO Convention 182 of 1999 which emphasised the worst form of children's labour that encouraged action against the national and international legal boundaries set up for child labour (UCW, 2010).

The 54 articles of the UNCRC (1989), which placed emphasis on the overall welfare and rights of children was summarised into three core principles; these are highlighted in the ACRWC⁶, 1990. The three core principles are:

- i. Provision rights which include the right to health, education, social security, care and leisure
- ii. Protection rights which include the right for safety from abuse, discrimination and injustice
- iii. Participation rights which include the right for children to contribute to matters that affect them, to have access to information and to be able to express their opinions (Smith, 2011).

These principles inspired the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF, 2008) in developing the Child-Friendliness Index (CFI) so that the performance of all the 54 African governments could be analysed and monitored (Casares, 2009; Bequele, 2010). The child-friendliness index involved each government manifesting their political will to make maximum efforts

⁶ This is extensively discussed in section 2.5

in meeting their duties of respecting, protecting and being able to fulfil the rights of children and ensuring their wellbeing.

The key components identified in assessing and determining the performance of government to extend protection rights to children are, inter alia, providing national laws that will protect children against harmful and exploitative activities and providing a legislative system with coordinating bodies that will implement children's rights (Bequele, 2010). However, while these laws are provided in the Nigerian legislation, implementing them is very challenging because of the discrepancies in the promulgation of laws in different parts of the country. Moreover, laws that are tenable in a particular state may not be tenable in another because of the cultural and religious diversity of the people (Ike and Twumasi-Ankrah, 1999; Agbo, 2017; Ogunniyi, 2018). For example, part of the cultural and religious beliefs in the northern region of Nigeria is for children to contribute economically to the household through begging, and very few children are involved in trading (Umar, 2010; Aliyu, 2010). In contrast, in the southern region of the country, children are predominantly involved in trading or vending, in order to contribute to the family economy (Cree and Okoli, 2012). A common factor is the acceptance in both the northern and the southern parts of the country that children should contribute to the household economy.

Table 1, below, gives a summary of the different rights that were promulgated for the protection and the overall wellbeing of children. These were promoted to create a common basis for children to be treated equally and to guide against children being deprived of their right to protection from any harmful and exploitative activities that may be forced on them by adults.

Table 1: Standard Summary of Children's Rights (1924-2011)

Year of establishment of the children's right	Names of the rights	Purpose of the rights
1924	General Declaration on Child Rights	'Mankind owes to the child the best that it has'. Specific children's rights were recognised for the first time by UN.
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Children have rights to 'Special help and assistance'. Help and assistance were emphasised in the declaration.
1959	Declaration of the Child's Rights	Countries with different cultures recognised, for the first time, the worldwide principles and the necessities of the child rights.
1966	International Treaties	Children are protected from exploitation and have the right to education.
1973	International Labour Organisation (Convention 138)	Specifically centred on minimum age for child employment. This is when the minimum age for child labour (while health and safety can be compromised) is 18 years, which is set by ILO.
1989	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children	All nation states adopt the political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights of children.
1999	International Labour Organisation (Convention 182)	ILO prohibits and acts against children exploited through the worst forms of child labour
2011	Optional Protocol	<p>The complaint procedure allows children or their representative to lodge a complaint before the committee set up to address issues that relate to the rights of the child.</p> <p>In the ratification of the Convention or an Optional Protocol, an obligation is accepted by the state of respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling the rights of the child as outlined; which includes the adoption or change of laws and policies that are needed in implementing the provisions of the agreement. Equal importance is placed on children's rights.</p>

The 1989 UNCRC emphasised the overall welfare and rights of the child and was generally well received. It has the highest number of ratifications of treaties specifically created for a particular group and it was the quickest to be adopted compared to previous human rights treaties (Kaime, 2009; Mbise, 2017). However, despite this there has been a failure in most African countries to recognise, adequately, the rights of their children (Mulinge, 2010; Cooper, 2012).

The first ten countries out of the total twenty to have initially signed up to the UNCRC were from Africa, reflecting the extent to which African governments were committed to the rights of children (Mbise, 2017). Ghana was the first African country to ratify the convention and all African countries have followed suit, most recently Somalia in 2015, except Southern Sudan which is yet to do so. These countries that have ratified the convention have all used the convention as a framework for the protection of children. However, there have been misgivings in the African continent since its inception including the under-representation of the African continent in the drafting of the convention document and the differences in understanding the socio-cultural context of African children and childhoods (Rwezaura, 1998; Njungwe, 2009). These limitations gave room for the promulgation of the ACRWC which was developed to take account of and embrace the nuanced socio-cultural needs of the African child that were not recognised by the UNCRC. Kaime (2009) argued that the lack of recognition and acceptance is partly because Africa did not play a prominent role in the development of the global framework for children's rights. Thus, international standards that respect the child's promotion and protection rights are profoundly shaped towards a western cultural value system and lack meaningful contributions from Africa.

2.6 THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACRWC)

African governments' first attempt in addressing the challenges of child labour and child abuse (Ebigbo, 2003) and how better protection can be ensured for children was influenced by the 1989 UNCRC, and in 1990 ACRWC was adopted by the different African States. Article 2 of the ACRWC defines the child as any individual under 18 years of age and there

are four principles underpinning the charter which, in turn, embrace other articles. These principles are:

- i. The non-discrimination principle: Whereby a child is not discriminated against by any persons in society.
- ii. The best interest of the child: Whereby the child's protection and welfare are considered first, before any other person's.
- iii. The survival and development principle: Whereby the child's health and social needs are considered before any other thing.
- iv. The participation principle: Whereby the child is allowed to participate and contribute to any issues that concern him or her.

The charter is specifically concerned about the overall protection against socially and culturally harmful practices that may be detrimental to the health and the overall wellbeing of the child, for example, child marriage, child labour and child abuse. It addresses child rights themes such as juvenile justice, armed conflicts, drug abuse, sexual exploitation and human trafficking (ACRWC, 1999; Mindzie, 2007).

The charter was the first central and broadly mandatory document that proclaimed children's rights in the African continent (Mindzie, 2007) and seems to have erased doubts about the definable rights of Nigerian children (Osment, 2014). Liebel (2004) affirmed that the aim of ACRWC is for children to grow, with others, in a considerate and supportive environment, where they can be responsible early in their lives. An African child is expected to share and learn to work with others in the community (Liebel, 2004).

Currently all 54 African states have signed the ACRWC, but seven are yet to ratify the charter (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, (ACERWC), 2015). Nigeria is one of the states that have both signed the charter and ratified it. The charter demands that African states consider the different experiences of African children and be able to provide a unique African structure in protecting and promoting children's rights (Kaime, 2009). Kaime (2009) argued that the charter's emphasis on African traditions and values created the need for a proper conceptual framework to elaborate children's rights within the African cultural context. Child rights in Africa require a critical approach that will consider local factors because they are not yet sufficiently recognised and culturally accepted across African society (Kaime, 2009).

Since the adoption of ACRWC, more countries in Africa have passed and continually adapted laws to protect the environment of their children through different local approaches and designs (Mulinge, 2010). However, many children across most African countries have continued to be victims of child labour and child exploitation with little or no opportunity for education (Basu, 1999; Bass, 2004). The children also face the challenge of having limited or non-accessible healthcare facilities. They are affected by neglect and abuse and are economically and sexually exploited (Ebigbo, 2003; Mulinge, 2010; Folami, 2011). All these are children's rights violations as specified by UNCRC in 1989 (Mulinge, 2010). According to Mulinge (2010), the UNCRC reported that the violation of these rights has continued, not because some states that are supposed to have ratified the CRC have not; nor due to inadequate legal frameworks or policies laid down for protection. Neither is it because there is no political will by those in the helms of affairs to protect the children's rights, but rather because there is a lack of commitment by the developing states in implementing the policies. Basu (1999) makes a similar observation and argues that the difficulty in the implementation of policies has affected the overall welfare of the child, especially in the context of social issues that relate directly to the wellbeing of children, such as children labourers/traders (Basu, 1999).

The challenges of policy implementation have also affected agencies such as social workers and/or social services, which have responsibility for children's welfare, especially in meeting the welfare needs of children who are caught up in various labour activities. This has slowed the pace of reducing child labour in Africa compared to western countries with child labour issues such as Brazil and Turkey (Basu, 1999; ILO, 2012). For example, a study by Laird (2011) of social workers in Ghana, about the challenges of the *social welfare department and family welfare tribunal* in implementing the agreement on child maintenance in the country, revealed several obstacles to successful implementation. Laird (2011) argued that, inter alia, the problem of legally enforcing children's rights in the different Sub-Saharan African countries has been a very significant impediment. The study identified statutory provision that disregarded customary law⁷ in relation to child care, which created conflicts between legislation and the fundamental norms of the society. Laird (2011) proposed a change in the existing child maintenance legislation in Ghana and other

⁷ Established traditional laws.

Sub-Saharan African regions so as to achieve coherence between legislation, socio-economic and socio-cultural reality and improve the enforcement of the law by the state agents. While this may be a positive step towards improving the protection and provision for the child through this legislation, I argue that it may be difficult to apply such a change to a country such as Nigeria because customary law on child care is neither uniform nor universal. This is because various ethnic communities have different customs and there is no single, binding customary law throughout the country (Ogunniran, 2010; Odewale, 2014). This can affect the protection of children from harm and exploitative activities such as trading, which may endanger their lives.

Reports have shown that, in the protection of children, Kenya's government has been most successful in Africa, in providing a suitable and legal strategy (Bequele, 2010). Furthermore, the laws provided include protection for children to guard against traditional practices that are harmful, for example, child labour, trafficking and sexual exploitation. In Nigeria, there is disparity even within the states and the regions on the policies and laws provided for Nigerian children. The constitutional procedure of the federation is unable to place issues about children within the legislative purview of the National Assembly; rather, they are within the state legislatures, which makes it difficult to establish an adequate legal framework that is applicable across the country (Ogunniran, 2010). This indicates that what may be suitable in the northern part of the country may not necessarily be suitable in the eastern part, for example. The criminal code, which is expected to be applicable in every state in Nigeria, for example, can only be applied in the northern states, subject to the penal code (Oba, 2002). In Kenya, policies and laws are consistent with the international minimum standard, compared to Nigeria where there is inconsistency (Bequele, 2010; Ogunniran, 2010). For example, while the minimum age for marriage and admission to employment across Nigeria is inconsistent⁸, in Kenya it is consistent with the global standard (Bequele, 2010; Ofodili, 2010). This inconsistency in Nigerian legislation has affected the implementation of policies that can stop children being exploited for economic gain (Ogunniran, 2010).

⁸ In the northern part of Nigeria, a child as young as 12 years is given out for marriage (as maturity is based on the start of menstruation) while other parts of the country adhere to the minimum age of 18 (Ogunniran, 2010; Braimah, 2014).

2.7 CHILD RIGHTS IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a Federal Republic divided into 36 states and, in addition, Abuja, as the Federal Capital Territory. There are three levels of government, federal, state and local government, with shared legislative responsibilities over different aspects of substantive and procedural laws (Oba, 2002). While the state and local governments are in control of implementing national policy, the federal government defines and monitors that policy. The 36 states are subdivided into 774 local government areas and each state has its own government, law and judiciary (Oba, 2002). Before the 2003 Child Rights Act, Nigerian children were protected through the Children and Young People's Act (CYPA), which relates to juvenile justice. This was passed into law by the British Colonial Government in 1943 (Oba, 2002). The Federation of Nigeria and Lagos regarded that law as chapter 32, and it was integrated into the laws of Nigeria in 1948. The legal provisions of this law did not meet with the rights afforded by the ACRWC, UNCRC and United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice. This paved the way for three conferences organised by the Nigerian Chapter of the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect in 1988, with the Ministries of Justice, Health and Social Welfare. These were held in conjunction with UNICEF to produce new draft laws on the Protection of Children in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2005). The Nigerian government was motivated by this draft to develop the present Child Rights Act 2003, with the definition of a new system of children's protection and creating participation opportunities for children on issues centred on their rights and welfare, previously absent in CYPA (Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba, 2010). Nigeria signed and ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and the ACRWC in 2003, but these are yet to be integrated into domestic law and thus carry no legal power in the country (Ogunniran, 2014). The law appears to be accepted and implemented at different levels in the different states of the country (Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba, 2010; Ofodili, 2010). But with each state having its own government and judiciary, this has led to a lack of implementation of the laws among the different states, with the laws having little positive effect on the rights of children across Nigeria (Ogunniran, 2014; Agbo, 2017). Additionally, while the Child Rights Act may be described by one state as legally binding, another state may describe it otherwise.

In Edo State, Child Rights Law (simplified edition), part 2 (Rights and Responsibility of a Child), section 28, which is a simplified extract from the CRA, states that:

‘No child shall be forced or subjected to child labour, employed to work in any capacity (except by a family member), required to lift heavy objects that will affect his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development or employed as a domestic help outside the child’s home or family environment’⁹

According to section 29 and 30,

‘Hawking (trading) or begging by children is against the law’¹⁰

Section 29 and 30 specified that hawking (trading) is against the law.

However, the law contradicts itself when in section 28, it states that ‘No child shall be ... subjected to child labour’ as hawking is grouped under child labour activities. The state may have been unable to address this challenge due to economic necessity and cultural traditions.

2.8 RATIONALE FOR RESEARCHING CHILD LABOUR IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILD TRADING IN NIGERIA

There is very little research that has explored how cultural values influence parents’ decision-making process in child labour practices. Most research on child labour has focused on child labour as a holistic entity or on its socio-economic determinants, often using quantitative methodology (Oloko, B. A., 1997; Omokhodion, Omokhodion, and Odusote, 2006; Amao and Oni, 2012). I therefore used a methodology that allowed children’s perception of their lived experiences of trading activities to be heard. The research on child labour has predominantly based its analysis of incidence and determining factors on poverty and the socio-economic conditions of the household (Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2006). The socio-cultural factors that contribute to the prevalence of child labour have been less researched as compared to poverty and socio-economic factors. This research addresses this issue. Basu and Van’s (1998) two-type models of the labour market (luxury axiom and substitution axiom) are examples of the need to look beyond socio-economic factors in addressing child labour. Basu and Van explained that the luxury axiom occurs when children are sent to work by their family or

⁹ & ¹⁰ Excerpts from the Simplified version of the Edo State Child Rights Law, 2014.

household only when there is poverty in the family. They stated that children attending school or having leisure without working are seen as having good luxury, while households in which adults earn very low income cannot afford to let their children play or keep them out of work. However, in the substitution axiom, Basu and Van argued that child labour can be substituted by adult labour, even when there is low income. The traditional idea that some jobs are more suitable for children than adults is contradicted, as the substitution axiom confirms that adults can do any jobs that children are made to do (Basu and Van, 1998; Humphries, 2012), while children need not work even if parents are poor. The implication of this model is that socio-economic factors should not be considered alone in addressing child labour prevalence; research should be directed to other factors such as socio-cultural factors that affect parents' decision-making process. This brings to the fore the argument on how child labour issues should be tackled.

According to Okpukpara and Odurukwe (2006) the argument about how child labour issues should be tackled stems from the lack of awareness of the causes and the challenge of being unable to stop child labour legislatively. Studies have identified various theories in tackling child labour where each theory reflects epistemological views about children, childhood and the social position of children as social actors in society (Abebe, 2011). There has been a major debate amongst researchers on the socially constructed view of work and labour, which is linked to how childhood is viewed in relation to the work children do and how childhood ought to be viewed (Abebe, 2009). However, these debates have emphasised tackling child labour challenges from socio-economic factors and undermining socio-cultural solutions. Research on the socio-cultural contributions of child labour is expected to address the prevalence of child labour especially in the African context where there are various cultural diversities within society.

Although child labour has been a globally researched subject and topic of debate, there are some aspects or forms of child labour that are under-represented in the literature (Abebe and Bessell, 2011). Four important areas of concern were identified by Abebe and Bessell (2011) as being less researched: 'domestic work – particularly among girls; the “worst forms” of child labour; what constitutes exploitation; and orphanhood and work' (p. 775). The list is not exhaustive. Other child labour problems that constitute exploitation include begging, trading and prostitution by children, which also fit Abebe and Bessell's category of the 'worst forms'

of child labour, but were not included in their lists; neither have these forms of child labour been studied on their own. Investigating the lives of children that trade within a market environment will aid in proffering solutions to reduce or eradicate child labour and will also bring awareness to policy makers on the need to look beyond socio-economic factors of child labour such as poverty in tackling the challenge.

Abebe and Bessell (2011) acknowledged that a critical understanding of the conditions of children that work is crucial to the debate and the discourse on child labour, and to get this understanding, research that involves children on issues that affect their daily lives is relevant. They argued that the discourse on a work-free childhood suggests that paid work is always considered exploitative, except when the work takes place in highly controlled conditions. This indicates that within a particular socio-cultural context, not all children who work are considered as exploited. There are locally acceptable or promotional forms of work that parents send their children to do which bring profits but may be considered as exploitative outside the confines of the family (Abebe and Bessell, 2011) and could also be exploitative within the household. Such work includes child labour in the context of child trading/hawking, a topic which is less studied and needs to be researched because such activity is enshrined in the Nigerian Labour Act (2003) as family business.

A limitation in this literature review is the lack of research that focuses specifically on child trading in a market space; that is also centred on the decision-making process of parents, influenced by socio-cultural factors. This study therefore expects to identify how cultural values influence parents' decision in sending their children to trade in a market space. The research also expects to explore how trading has affected children's lives.

Having reviewed the literature on children, childhood and child rights in relation to child labour and its policy context in this chapter, the rationale for further understanding of child labour in the context of child trading is imminent and it entails three dimensions. These are the need to:

1. hear from children who trade within a market space, their experiences as they trade, and identify how they are affected by the activity.

2. understand the perception of other stakeholders of how socio-cultural factors contribute to parents' decision in sending their children to trade.
3. understand the extent to which children and parents are aware of the rights of the child.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has considered definitions of the child ranging from a wider perspective to one which is more localised, where definitions occur within a specific context of cultural differences. The conceptualisation of childhood from historical traditions to adulthood through puberty has been considered and compared to contemporary years where society is represented through the maturation process to adulthood.

I also presented global perceptions of the rights of the child and the implementation of the policies within the regulation. I have highlighted the origin and the implementation of the United Nations child rights law. The rights of the child are also viewed from a cultural perspective by considering the understanding of children's rights in the African context and then within a smaller localised entity such as Edo state in Nigeria.

Finally, I have discussed the rationale for the research giving the limitations in the literature on the issues of child labour in relation to child trading.

CHAPTER 3: CHILD LABOUR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins by exploring the incidence and prevalence of child labour and focuses on its multiple constructions as harmful to children, in particular relating to the degree of harm it might cause. Some scholars consider child labour to be light work that is not harmful while others consider it to be exploitative and damaging to the child. This chapter does not critically evaluate the magnitude of child labour; rather, it reveals how child labour is conceptualised in a diverse country like Nigeria and focuses particularly on the context of child trading in a Nigerian market space. Wider perspectives of the phenomenon in other developing countries are first explored prior to exploring the particular country of Nigeria.

3.2 THE INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF CHILD LABOUR

The 2017 report of ILO estimated the number of children involved in child labour activities at 152 million, 73 million of whom were in hazardous work. On the regional prevalence of child labour, Africa constitutes the highest with 19.6 per cent, while in Asia and the Pacific it is 7.4 per cent, the Americas 5.3 per cent, Europe and Central Asia 4.1 per cent and Arab States 2.9%. Three regions, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, are estimated to host nine out of ten children in labour activities (ILO, 2017). In Asia 61 per cent of child workers were between the ages of 5 and 14, Africa had 32 per cent within the same age range while Latin America had 7 per cent. In Sub-Saharan Africa one in four children aged 5-17 worked, compared to one in eight in Asia Pacific and one in ten in Latin America and the Caribbean (ILO, 2010). While Asia had the highest number of child workers¹¹ (61 per cent), Africa had the highest prevalence of child labourers¹² with 40 per cent (ILO, 2010).

Statistics by the ILO (2012) report estimated that, in 2008, the Sub-Saharan Africa region accounted for 30 per cent of all children aged 5-17 years who were involved in labour activities, and that from 2008 to 2012 child labour reduced in every region of the world except Sub-Saharan Africa, where there was an increase from 30 to 35 per cent (ILO, 2012). Moreover, statistics from UNICEF global databases in 2014 state that the largest proportion

¹¹ & ¹² Child workers include children who are involved in both child labour and hazardous work while child labourers are children who are excluded from hazardous work.

of child labourers was still in Sub-Saharan Africa with 27 per cent of children aged 5 to 14 years involved in child labour activities. The most recent estimates in 2016 also suggest a rise in child labour in Sub-Sahara Africa between 2012 and 2016 (ILO, 2017). The report states that this is in spite of various targeted policies that have been implemented by African governments to fight against child labour. It is likely that the retrogression was driven in important part by broader economic and demographic forces acting against governmental efforts,

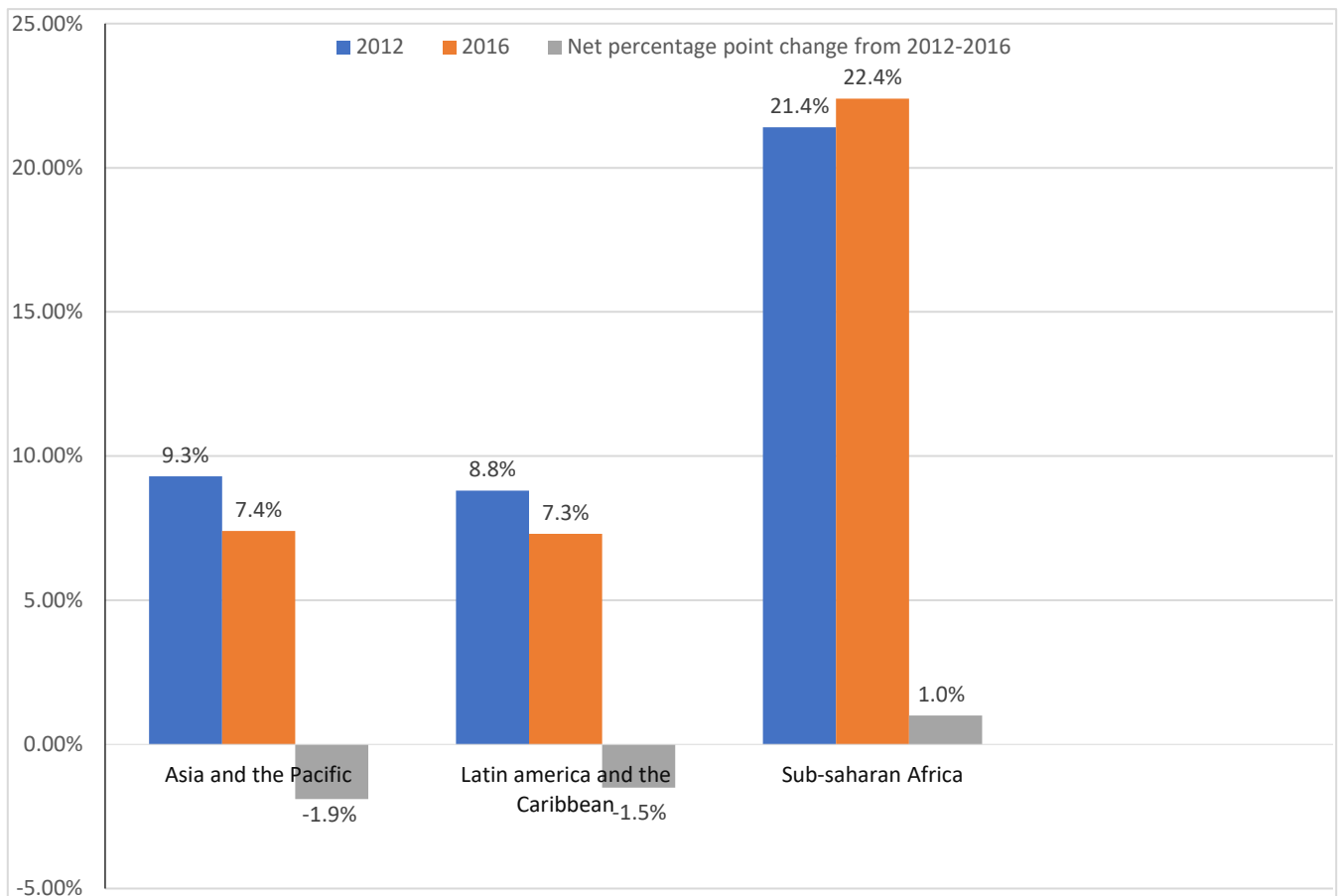
Similarly, a report by ILO (2012) entitled 'Tackling Child Labour: From Commitment to Action' maintained that worldwide reduction of child labourers has been very slow because it is outweighed by being unable to move beyond 'commitment' to 'practice'. Although different Africa countries have made a commitment to the inclusion of the ILO principles and the UNCRC's articles in their government policies, many are not fully able to apply the principles in practice, nor are they able to enforce them (Ofodili, 2010). This has affected progress in the reduction/elimination of child labour in these countries.

The most recent report of ILO (2017) on the incidence and prevalence of child labour indicates that there has been a global decline in child labour prevalence between 2012 and 2016. However, compared with the 2008 to 2012 estimate, there is a significant slowing down of progress in that decline. While there was a 3 per cent global fall of children in labour within 2008 to 2012, between 2012 and 2016 there was only 1 per cent global fall. It was suggested that for there to be a global end of child labourers, there has to be a breakthrough in Africa (ILO, 2017).

Figure 3 below illustrates children's involvement in child labour between 2012 and 2016 within different regions of the world. In contrast to other regions of the world where child labour has continued to decline, UNICEF (2017) estimates suggested that in Sub-Saharan Africa that there was a percentage increase from 21.4 per cent in 2012 to 22.4 per cent in 2016, compared to Asia and the Pacific and Latin America with 9.3 per cent in 2012 to 7.4 per cent in 2016 and 8.8 per cent in 2012 to 7.3 per cent in 2016 respectively (ILO, 2017). It was argued that despite various efforts made by African governments to implement a number of targeted policies to combat child labour activities, child labour continues to

increase in this region. The report suggested that the regression may have been driven by wider economic and demographic forces acting against government efforts (ILO, 2017).

Figure 3: Change in Children’s involvement in Child Labour from 2012 to 2016, by Region and Percentage of Children in Child Labour, 5–17 year age group, 2012 and 2016

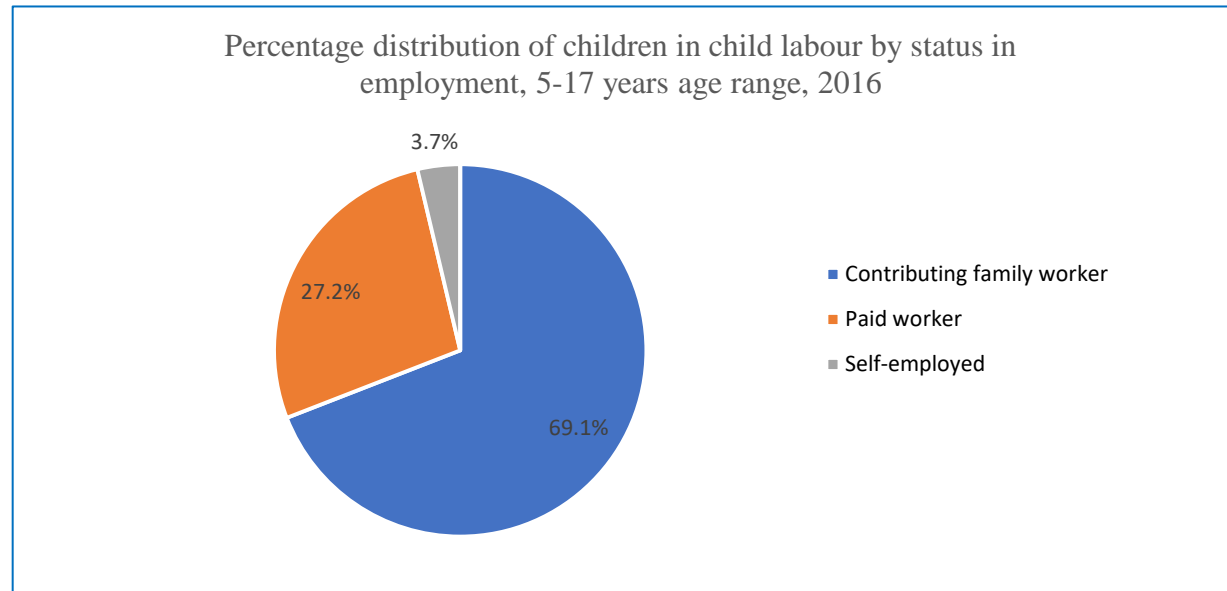


Global Estimates and Trends of Child Labour (Source: ILO, 2017)

It must be noted that the decrease in child labour in the different regions of the world shown here, does not take into account or show data regarding the different types of work children do. Because that level of detail is not specified in the research that informs these figures, interventions that are developed in response to these figures are not as effective as they could be. (Srivastava, 2013). It has been argued that implementing properly informed government policies could effectively deal with the complex challenges within children’s work which are not covered by effective labour policies (Bessell, 2010; Srivastava, 2013). For example, the differences in minimum age and in all forms of child labour including

child trading (often viewed under family business) affect the policies on the different types of work that children do (Srivastava, 2013).

Figure 4: Percentage distribution of children in child labour by status in employment



Global estimates of child labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016 (Source: ILO, 2017 report)

The above figure is the percentage of children in labour activities by employment status in 2016 as illustrated by the ILO report of 2017. The percentage of children contributing as a family worker through participation in family business is the highest with 69.1 per cent involved in the labour activities as compared to paid workers outside the family with 27.2 per cent and self-employed at 3.7 per cent involved in the labour activity. Although the Child Rights Act (CRA 2003) categorises child trading within the spectrum of child labour, child trading is also seen by the local community where it takes place as part of family business.

Two policy areas particularly relevant to the decline in child labour over the last twelve years are education and social protection (Hartjen and Priyadarsini, 2012). UNICEF (2014) stated that child labour is a barrier to education, which affects both the attendance and performance of children in school. A general decline in child labour in the different regions of the world (even though the decline is not across all regions) has been supported by investments in improving school access and quality education, providing more opportunity

for families to send their children to school rather than work (Amao and Oni, 2012; UNICEF, 2014).

The decline in child labour in terms of social protection has been on the basis of the social security of children. Progress in eliminating child labour is among other things linked to the provision of social protection and adequate levels of regular income to families (UNICEF, 2014). UNICEF (2014) reports that a social protection system that is functioning well can address some of the fundamental causes of exploitation, abuse and neglect of children.

3.3 CONCEPTUALISATION, DEFINITION AND CONTEXT OF CHILD LABOUR AND CHILD WORK

Child labour has been generally acknowledged as a serious problem that needs to be understood and addressed. The ILO report (2012) confirms that child labour involves policy choices in different areas which include education, healthcare, labour markets, enforcement of labour standards and legislation, social protection, access to basic services, the distribution of income, social norms and cultural practices; all of which have a significant role to play in the lives of children. Child labour in the context of child trading has various complexities that need to be studied, because what appears to be harmful to children's health and wellbeing when viewed from a particular form of labour activity may not be viewed as harmful from other forms, especially as different work activities are grouped under child labour. For example, the degree of harm associated with children who work in a coal mining industry is different from that of children who trade in the street and/or market space.

There are multiple constructions of child labour that make it a difficult and problematic concept to define (Abebe, 2009). Some arguments against child labour construct it as harmful and claim it should be eliminated and should not be part of a child's life when growing up (Agbo, 2017). Others argue that not all work that children do should be perceived as child labour that affects their lives negatively, but that it is work performed by children and contributes positively to the overall child development (Lieten, 2011; Ritchie, 2012; Okoli and Cree, 2012; Okyere, 2012). Others have also argued that different cultures hold expectations and goals for their children that can make child labour very complicated

to define (Pantea, 2009; Bourdillon, Levison, Myers, and White, 2010). Assan and Hill (2011) explained that the difficulty in definition is influenced by the general perception of childhood in a particular society, and by the culturally bounded social attitudes and national laws which prevail in some of these societies.

In defining child labour, different scholars have provided different definitions from various perspectives. Bhat (2010) defines it in terms of age and the social situation in which child labour exists and distinguishes it from child work. He explained that defining child labour is problematic because it contains three difficult concepts: '*child*', '*work*' and '*labour*' (p. 324). He argued that defining a child in terms of age may not be a sufficient basis for its meaning in some societies; instead certain social rites and traditional obligations may be required in differentiating '*child*' and '*adult*' status (Bhat, 2010, p. 324).

Omokhodion, Omokhodion, and Odusote (2006) explained that there is no clearly defined demarcation between child work and child labour. While child work is considered to be part of growing up to become a responsible adult, there are many children who are involved in such economic activities that are regarded as child labour. Moyi (2011) defined such labour activities as being '*characterised by low wages, long hours, and in many cases physical and sexual abuse*' (p. 26). Umar (2010) suggests these characteristics can be applied to child trading. Abebe and Bessell (2011) maintained that individual perception about the definition of work and labour generates the debate on child labour. Such debate creates wider perceptions in society of what work should be done by children and what work should not be done by them. As a result, the terms and concepts used to distinguish the work that children do and child labour/trading are not always consistent with the statistics and research that are reported and published (UCW, 2007).

Moyi (2011) argued that child labour is a complex phenomenon because the definition is either too broad and may include child work that is beneficial or too narrow and may exclude child activities that are harmful. Some authors have argued that for child abuse and/or child labour's definition to be meaningful, it should be culturally relevant (Ike and Twumasi-Ankrah, 1999). Ike and Twumasi-Ankrah contend that when child abuse and the socio-economic activities of children are being articulated, experts should guard against a

global definition, stressing the need for their definition to be operationalised so that the meanings and diversity of culture can be reflected.

The complex definition of child labour by ILO has created argument about at what stage work done by a child is regarded to be light work and at what stage work becomes hazardous. The ILO (2002) defined light work as the participation of children in economic activities that are positive and that do not negatively affect their health and/or their development and education. The report also provided a definition of child labour as any economic activity that children under age fifteen do, that may endanger their lives in various ways either through physical, social, moral or psychological means. This may deprive them of the opportunity to go to school and interrupt those already in school from continuing (ILO Convention 138/1973). The ILO definition categorised children involved in child labour into three different groups:

- i. Children below 12 years (that work for economic gain for at least an hour per week)
- ii. Children who are less than 14 years (that are involved in economic activities for at least fourteen hours per week) and
- iii. Children that are 17 years or less (that work at least forty-three hours per week; participate in hazardous activities for one or more hours per week and those who are involved in the worst forms of child labour such as being forcibly recruited for slavery, prostitution, trafficking, illegal activities and exposure to hazardous work) (ILO, 138/1973; Edmonds, 2008).

Further emphasis was placed on extreme hazards that involve illnesses, being separated from parents and children having to care for themselves from a very tender age with no support from anyone.

Table 2: Summary of ILO Age Definition for Working Children

Category of work	Years (Age)	Hours of work
Economic gain	12 years and less	1 hour/week
Economic activities	14 years and less	14 hours/week
Worst forms of labour	17 years and less	43 hours/week

There are a number of flexible clauses contained in the international legal standards that leave decisions with competent national authorities to consult with workers and employers' organisations on child labour (UCW, 2010). However, some researchers have argued that the ILO categorization of child labour has had a negative effect on progress towards the reduction or eradication of the phenomenon (Bhukuth, 2008; Bessell, 2011). For example, it is problematic to overlook children that are employed in family domestic work or family business since disregarding this economic activity that the children do often denies them their basic rights to education (Bhukuth, 2008). Given this complexity, there remains a need to adopt a definition that can be operationalised in the approach to this research. The working definition adopted in this study therefore draws on Lieten's (2011) and Bhukuth's (2008) definition in which child labour is described as any work that affects the physical development of a child and where there is no opportunity for a desired minimum education and leisure needs. However, in the literature, child labour is divided into different categories which are explored below.

3.4 CATEGORISATION OF CHILD LABOUR

Globally child labour is defined by international organisations in relation to age and type of work. Type of work includes hazardous work, which may be harmful to children, and non-hazardous work, which may not be harmful (ILO, 2012). Categorising work that could be harmful to children's physical and mental development and that which may not, by the ILO, reveals the complexity of the nature of the phenomenon (Bhukuth, 2008). Bessell (2011) argued that the economic definition of child labour offered by the ILO does not involve all forms of child labour. Bhukuth (2008) maintains that although there is a global agreement that the worst forms of child labour should be eliminated, it becomes difficult to reach a general agreement when 'light work' is being defined.

Bhukuth (2008) suggests that the complex nature of child labour has led several researchers to argue that categorising the phenomenon has prevented a consensus definition which, in turn, has delayed progress in addressing the widespread prevalence of the phenomenon. Webbink, Smits, and Jong (2012) contend that there exists work regarded as 'light' which is not visible, but could be negative, damaging and dangerous. I argue that child trading in this context could be erroneously viewed as light work because it is being generally

acknowledged under the category of family business. Children are engaged in work regarded as non-hazardous which may become hazardous in times of labour shortage because of changes (for example changes as a result of the death of a member of the family or changes as a result of an unfavourable weather condition) in the immediate and wider societal environment in which they live (Pantea, 2009; Oni, Onyene, and Udida, 2012). Edmonds and Pavcnik (2005) maintain that most working children participate in activities that can be harmful or beneficial to them, but this depends on the circumstances in which the activities are performed. The impact that child labour has on the wellbeing of children will depend on what children do when not working.

Gormly and Ritualo (2005) identified hazardous work using data from ILO's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) to survey Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. They analysed information on how the type of work, hours and conditions of workplace and their characteristics, which include physical and mental safety, parents' perceptions of child work, and hours spent on household chores affect children. Data on household basic demography, social and economic characteristics which contains measures of child health, work and exposure to hazards were also included in the analysis. The authors concluded that targeted legal intervention to eliminate work that is truly exploitative can benefit all children. In the case of child trading this could involve targeting intervention through legal provision of trading not as a family business but rather as economically exploitative activity (Togunde and Richardson, 2006; Buriel, 2012).

In the ILO (2012) report, it was suggested that there are some countries that do not have legal provisions for light work, and among those countries that have such provision, there are differences in terms of the relevant age range of children who are involved in light work and in understanding what it entails. Similarly, not all countries have specified national lists of hazardous works. For example, in Nigeria, legislation relating to child labour (child trading) placed the minimum age at 15 years; and while there is no legislative provision for light work, a 'hazardous work' list was validated in 2013 (ILO, 2013). In the Labour Act 1990, chapter 198, in principle 59, it is stated *'that no child shall be employed or work in any capacity except where the employment is by a member of his family on light work of an agricultural, horticultural or domestic activity that is approved by the minister'*. Although child trading is an employment by members of the child's family (often the parents), it is

not categorised under light work¹³. Children are vulnerable to different risks and harmful conditions that can affect their physical and mental health if involved in hazardous work like trading (Agbo, 2017). I argue that principle 59 has its flaw in that the measure of work (trading) done by children within their family business often cannot be quantified.

Moreover, there are no established processes utilised by ministers¹⁴ to approve that children be allowed to work (trade) in the family business because the said work does not affect their physical and psychological wellbeing. These are issues that need to be addressed. Child trading is one example of such forms of work that are regarded as family business where some children work alongside their parents within markets while others are left to trade on their own.

3.5 CAUSES AND DETERMINANT OF CHILD LABOUR

Child labour has been most prevalent in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Research has shown that the causes are numerous, and its prevalence has been explained from various perspectives. Poverty has been asserted as the major determinant (Rimmer, 1992; Bass, 2004; Togunde and Carter, 2006; Hilson, 2010; Omokhodion and Uchendu, 2010; Clark, 2012). Other key factors identified include the level of parental vulnerability, lack of access to credit, poor educational services, lack of social security mechanisms, debt, and increasing population that could result in child labour activities.

Most attention has been centred on socio-economic and demographic causes of child labour in the different regions of the world, with less attention on the socio-cultural determinants (ILO, 2005). Ennew et al. (2005) contend that the socio-cultural perspective should be considered as a means through which children regard themselves as achievers and are proud of being able to contribute to the family or the society when they engage in any form of work including trading.

While there have been various empirical works on the determinants of child labour, there is a wide range of reasons given for its prevalence. A number of authors have emphasised the role of poverty in pushing children onto the streets as traders and keeping them there

^{13&14} See Edo state Child Rights Law, part 2, section 29 & 30

despite efforts to protect them. For example, a study by Nafees, Khan, Fatmi, and Aslam (2012) on the perception of children on child labour in Karachi revealed various health issues among the child labourers which include respiratory illnesses, fever, generalised pains, and the effects of drug and sexual abuse. Their findings revealed that the main determinant of child labour was poverty. It was suggested that the best practices identified for intervention were evening lessons and drop-in sessions for children that work and the provision of skills-based education and basic health facilities. However, in a different study of children that work in urban Brazil by Neri and Thomas (2001), it was discovered that children are more likely to work and repeat a year class during the periods of economic growth and this played an important role in household decision-making.

Similarly, Edmonds (2005), in two different studies, found in his first study in Vietnam that improvements in household economic status explained the very high rate of the decline in child labour, while in his second study in South Africa, an anticipated transfer of cash to the elderly due to an old age pension system that helped lift many older South Africans out of poverty was associated with an increase in schooling and reduction in child labour.

Four different surveys on children and youth seeking to use different economic strategies in shaping their lives were analysed through data collected from four countries in West Africa: Ghana, Mali, Sierra Leone and Liberia. In each of the cases, Hilson (2012) concluded that child labour was the result of poverty, inability to pay school fees and the economic conditions of the family. In the study Hilson (2012) observed that all the children that participated in the survey lived under difficult circumstances and those who were homeless and spent their lives on the street had the tendency to be physically and mentally stressed. One of the key issues in Hilson's survey was that the average West African child that spent most of their daily lives in the street faced the hard challenge of trying to be bold and brave, so they could endure and survive. Although children can comprehend their situation as being the victims of circumstances, they try to adapt to the situation (Hilson, 2012). This leads them to adopt an economic strategy that is useful to them, so that they can take control of their lives and support their family. Male and female children are both involved in this activity with differences in the ratio of females to males varying in relation to the geographical location and the type of goods sold (Aliyu, 2006; Umar, 2009; Oyeniyi and Agunbiade, 2009).

3.5.1 Labour Activities by Children within the Family

Child labour entails all economic activities involving children regardless of their work status (Oloko, 1997). Economic activity is a broad concept encompassing most productive activities performed by children; it includes work that is permissible under ILO conventions and that which is not permissible (ILO-IPEC, 2002). Street or market trading by children is a form of economic activity in which children are involved in trading or sales of wares by moving from one place to another in streets, roads and markets within a community (Umar, 2009). Such activity, also described as vending, is a form of child labour. There has been growing research on such working children in the developing world including Sub-Saharan Africa which has focused more on children's diverse street careers and their everyday lives than other labour activities such as child trading in the market and domestic work in the household (Aliyu, 2006; Omokhodion, Omokhodion, and Odusote, 2006; Umar, 2009; Agbo, 2017).

In a study of groups of children that work in the artisanal gold mining site in Ghana, Okyere (2012) explained that the work that some children do may be potentially harmful to them. However, he maintained that the work is a means through which the children attempt to get access to their rights to education, arguing that it may not be in the best interest of the children if they are denied the opportunity to work without considering the negative effect the denial may eventually have on them. He proposed that any intervention that seeks to end children's work at the site should also seek to address the reason the children are involved in the work.

The assumption that when children work within the family business they encounter less risk than when they work outside the family is not always the case (Zierold, Appana, and Anderson, 2012). Zierold, Appana, and Anderson (2012) have argued that children who work in family businesses may be at a greater risk of being more severely injured because of the type of job and the dangerous tasks they engage in including those tasks that are illegal. When a child is not adequately protected in the family, such families may depend on their children to work no matter how dangerous or risky that work may be (UCW, 2010). This often occurs when the family is ignorant of the importance, advantage and benefits of education and where there are cultural norms that encourage child work against education.

Children from such households are encouraged to work for the family instead of going to school, disregarding the danger and risk involved in the work (Edmonds, 2008).

Children accept the culturally prescribed responsibility of a child within the family to be a worker whose work is beneficial or even essential in improving the financial wellbeing of the family (Parke, 2013). Moreover, children's contributions to the family are frequently viewed by adults (parents) as opportunities to encourage the children to become mature, responsible and appreciative of family aspirations and values (Buriel, 2012). There is a general perception in policy campaigns that parents force their children to work, but this does not always reflect contextual realities. Children are able to develop '*resilience to daily hardships*' when they work (Abebe and Bessell, 2011, p. 777). Liebel (2004) argued that many children work not only because they have no solution to their problems or they are indebted to their families but rather when they work, they can overcome their weakness and feel more confident. Working children are perceived to be socially active individuals that contribute to the development of everyone (Haider, 2008).

It is therefore relevant that different types of strategies and effective advocacies are utilised in building various means of eradicating child labour and encouraging families to change their attitudes towards child labour.

3.5.2 The Family: Children and Parental Power

The family is not always a homogenous unit (it can be heterogeneous), and parental power must be accounted for when child labour in the context of trading is being discussed. Parental power is most often expressed when parents decide to send their children to trade. In dealing with the issue of the economic activities of children, parental power and behaviour cannot be overlooked. Parental decisions are assumed to be influenced by cultural patterns and local traditions (Webbink, Smits, and Jong, 2012). Decisions about the involvement of children in economic activities are generally taken by parents (Arat, 2002; Webbink, Smits, and Jong, 2012). Webbink, Smits, and Jong (2012) argued that the decision-making processes of parents are guided by the costs and benefits for the parents themselves, their family, and the children on whose behalf the decisions are taken. Fife (2013) described parental power as the most sensitive issue in the child labour discourse and it is difficult for outsiders to grasp the power dynamic within one culture and another.

Fife explained that all children are situated within their family in a position of dependency and vulnerability which is reflected across all levels of society. The natural vulnerability of infancy gives rise to a structured vulnerability in early childhood that limits the familial and social position and independence of older children. It is this socially constructed state of dependence that continues to make children vulnerable and powerless (James and James, 2008).

In an economy where there is much competition for scarce resources, the family can only survive by depending on the economic contribution of each member, which includes the children (Deaton, 2018). Children are expected to do work that is extensively productive, so they can develop the ability to accumulate capital (Folami, 2011). Ebbe and Dilip (2007) argued that child labour may be considered necessary for a family to survive in a country where poverty levels and unemployment are very high. Children are then made to start working at a very tender age. While the family and/or the parents of the children enjoy the income that is generated by the children, it is assumed that the children are forced to participate in the economic activity (Berlan, 2009). At the same time, the work of children, culturally, is not perceived by adults as work, but rather as children's responsibility towards their immediate family (Togunde and Richardson, 2006; Buriel, 2012). There is a growing need for these experiences to be explored from the perspective of both children and parents (Umar, 2009).

Rogers and Swinnertons (2005) suggest that decisions are made by parents about whether a child is to be kept at home or sent to the market to work. They emphasised that if children can stay at home, parents will be contributing to their children's consumption, but if the children go to the market to work, they can contribute meaningfully to the home. However, the authors conclude that being able to contribute meaningfully to the home depends on whether the job will provide good wages. If the wages are good then it is better for the child to work instead of staying at home, but the child becomes worse off if the pay is not good, because the low wages will then affect the care and welfare of that child.

Children are encouraged to work by their parents through certain moral and cultural values. The moral and cultural value of being obedient and respectful to adults in general and particularly to parents, encourages children to become involved in economic activities, so

that they can contribute positively to the household (Boyden and Crivello, 2012). In most African communities, the delicate issues of differences in values and beliefs are an important part of community work that is negotiated within the community (Axner, 2009). The need for a good understanding of issues relating to culture, traditions and/or practices within the lived experiences of children involved in child labour are important in contributing to the development and the implementation of policies that will improve the general wellbeing of every member of a family and the people in a community (Maluleke, 2012).

Responsibility to the family is a fundamental cultural value among some developing countries and the operationalisation of these values often takes the form of young children habitually dedicating many hours to assisting their parents in their (parents') occupation (Buriel, 2012; Agbo, 2017). Buriel (2012) describes the perception of parents towards the assistance of their children as viewing it to be part of a positive contribution to the welfare of the family. Positive contribution to the welfare of the family is viewed within the perception of children's responsibility to their parents, where children's rights and their best interest are negated. However, if a child not working means fewer family resources, this also may not be in the best interest of the child. It is therefore imperative that a system of government support in terms of resources might be needed, to guarantee that taking children out of work does not meet some needs (such as education) while denying others (such as adequate food, clothing and shelter). It is also important to evaluate how decisions made by parents are influenced by socio-cultural factors within the household, an issue which is fundamental to the rationale for this study.

3.6 SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF CHILD LABOUR

The discourse about child labour has achieved greater recognition in recent decades based on socio-economic and structural perspectives (Cisneros and Neumann, 2009; Abebe and Bessell, 2011). Abebe and Bessell (2011) explained that the social studies of childhood changed the natural 'common sense' of children into a socio-cultural concept that suggests children's work is inseparably linked to the social and cultural context in which it takes place. Siddiqi and Patrinos (1995) maintained that one of the reasons children are involved in child labour is the effect of traditional factors such as rigid cultural and social roles in

certain countries. There is little research centred on how socio-cultural values influence the decisions of parents to send their children to trade.

In the discourse about the socio-cultural determinants of child labour, various concepts associated with it (such as culture), need to be addressed so that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in relation to child trading can be achieved.

3.6.1 Culture

Storey (2009) describes culture as one of the most complex issues and suggests it entails three broad definitions:

- i. A general process of intellectual development, involving spiritual and aesthetic factors like the great philosophers, artists and poets.
- ii. A specific way of life which entails people, periods or groups that includes literacy and religious festivals.
- iii. Referring to intellectual and artistic works and practices that involve the production of meaning.

Culture carries different types of meaning in different contexts and is a complicated and potentially relativistic issue that is socially constructed (Asemah, Ekhareafo, and Olaniran, 2013). The meaning of culture changes according to the social and historical context of the time; and each person is shaped by their experiences and interactions (Zou, Tam, Morris, Lee, Lau, and Chiu, 2009). This can be applied to child labour as historical practice includes children being involved in the production of goods as part of the experience of growing up.

Culture is defined as the combination of ideas, customs and behaviour of people or society (Maluleke, 2012). Ogbujah (2014) maintained that culture is associated with the total way of life of the people such as their laws, customs, conventions and values which embody the totality of people's response to nature and the social environment. Phillips (2007) explained that culture is viewed by people in different ways, with some people acknowledging that cultural norms have helped them, while others believe they moderate the behavioural excesses of different individuals. Sergio (1988), Lehman, Chiu, and Schaller (2004) and Chiu and Hong (2006) defined culture as a tradition of transmitted knowledge, values, beliefs, languages, customs and practices that are socially shared across members in each

society and across its generations. Rohner (1984) concludes that culture is abstracted from human behaviours and entails an interactive process between the observed and the observer. Every individual, therefore, is born in the context of a culture. Individuals' behaviours and attitudes are shaped in relation to the values, beliefs and practices of that culture whether they are consciously aware of it or not; and often people are unaware of the impact of culture in relation to the environment in which they live (Anfara and Mertz, 2015). For example, living and experiencing growing up in an environment where children contribute to the household by being involved in economic activity inform parents to also get their children into child labour activity.

Individuals' perceptions and interpretations of traditional beliefs vary according to social class rather than individuals' level of personal commitment to their beliefs (Zou et al., 2009). Triandis (2001) argued that culture shapes people's values, beliefs and attitudes even though such values, beliefs and attitudes are sometimes different between individuals and groups within a society. Darling and Steinberg (1993) maintained that an individualistic culture tends to prioritise independence and pursues individual achievement; in contrast, a collectivist culture places importance on the group where the individual contributes to the health and progress of the family and the community. In collectivist societies, values such as being helpful, conforming and interdependent within the family are promoted by parents (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Maluleke (2012) contended that while western culture tends to be individualistic by focusing on each person's achievements and his/her personal interest, African culture tends to be collective, group-oriented and centred on the welfare of the overall community through collective contributions. These encourage parents to depend on their children to assist them because of the socially constructed perception of living in a collective society. The author further argued that African traditional culture can find an agreed resolution to social problems through collective responsibility to the community 'as opposed to being individualistic and competitive' (p. 16). Maluleke (2012) explained that taking decisions in African culture is by communal agreement and the outcomes of the decisions are shared together whether they turn out positive or negative. This is in contrast with individualistic culture where an individual is rewarded according to merit; and decisions are taken by either or both parents and sometimes by the government with the best interest of the child as paramount.

African traditional practices often encourage child labour because it is widely accepted in the developing world especially in Africa that children are expected to engage in work (Children and Childhood Report, 2008). Cultural traditions shape the activities of people generally (UCW, 2007). Due to this, for example, there is less value placed on girls' education and in extreme cases it is expected that formal schooling is not needed by the girl child in many African cultures (Umar, 2006; UNICEF, 2007; Weimann, 2009).

3.6.2 Cultural Values

Cultural practices are reflected in the values and beliefs that are held by members of a community across generations, and there are specific cultural practices and values which are held in every social group in the world (Maluleke, 2012). Some of these cultural practices and values may be favourable to members of each group while other members could be harmed by these practices (Maluleke, 2012). In defining cultural values, Schwartz (2008) proposed a representation of shared ideas in the context of what the society believes is good, right and desirable. The exposure of individuals to cultural values in the environment where they live provides incentives and disincentives through which the attitudes and behaviours of the individuals are guided (Schwartz, 2008). Fetuga, Njokama, and Olowu (2005) argued that the influence of cultural values in terms of child rearing may also be used to explain the high prevalence of child labour in Ijebu town, Nigeria, where the people are known to be very industrious. This attitude applies to most people from the southern part of the country where parents introduce their children to family economic activities at an early age. This is because it is culturally significant for children to have the knowledge of skills that will give them an assured future; just as it is of cultural value that for children to be able to manage when they become adults, there is a need to consider the exposure to hard work (Kaomba, 2013).

Cultural values are able to shape groups' relationship within a society by guiding the attitudes of every member of the group (Schiefer, 2013). Values are designed to promote ethical actions that entail comprehensive preference that is centred on the right path towards successful action or outcome, reflecting the ability a person has in distinguishing between good or bad, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, useful or useless (Ogbujah, 2014). While the thinking of different individuals in the society is assumed to be directed by cultural values

(Schiefer, 2013), conversely, individual values are perceived to provoke a definite type of attitude that creates specific kinds of behaviour (Ogbujah, 2014). Ogbujah (2014) explained that since culture is a socially shared system of common values, cultural value entails standards that are commonly held which may be acceptable or unacceptable, significant or insignificant, workable or not workable in a specific community that is relevant to the people. Storey (2012, p. 208) contends that it 'operates in identifying and maintaining social difference and sustaining social deference'.

Child labour is influenced by a range of cultural values of which religious values are one element. There are several religions in Nigeria and these affect individual cultural values differently, including in relation to child labour. Varying patterns of child labour can be seen in the different regions of the country, and this arguably has some link to religious values. In the north, Islam is the dominant religion, whereas in the south Christianity is more common (Suberu, 2009; Onapajo, 2012). Umar (2006) and Aliyu (2006) both carried out studies in the Northern part of Nigeria, where they found that more of the children involved in labour activities were Islamic. However, Omokhodion, Omokhodion, and Odusote (2006) and Omokhodion and Uchendu (2010) argue that child labourers in Nigeria come from a range of religious backgrounds. Fetuga, Nkokama and Olowu (2005) suggest that a small percentage of children from Christian backgrounds are involved in labour activity in the north compared to the south; yet this is to be expected given the dominance of Islam in this area.

The primary aim of this study is not to investigate the influence of religion specifically on the socio-cultural values which contribute to an acceptance of child labour. Nevertheless, religion can be noted as one of the factors that contribute, albeit in different ways depending on the belief system involved. For example, socio-cultural values such as obedience and respect among others, partially reflect a Christian emphasis, although there are also resonances with other religions. Nigeria is multicultural, hence its socio-cultural values are not uniform and are observed differently across the country.

Religious values can contribute to the particular expression of child labour in some instances. Aliyu's (2006) study based in Zaria found that children were more likely to be involved in begging than other labour activities such as trading, which is more prevalent in

the south. This could perhaps reflect dominant religious values to some extent. Women's involvement in their children's labour can also be affected by gendered expectations (Weirmann, 2009). Lamidi (2016, p. 186) argues that: 'In most parts of Nigeria, women are expected to support, financially, themselves and their children' (Lamidi, 2016, p. 186), but due to restrictions on social mobility of women in the northern part of the country, they are unable to do so. The southern part of Nigeria, especially Benin City, is dominated by the Christian religion, which does not restrict women's social mobility (Suberu, 2009; Onapajo, 2012); however, women may still be motivated to send their children to trade due to their socio-cultural and socio-economic background. Socio-cultural values can reflect the Christian religion's emphasis on obedience from children, whilst socio-economic factors, such as women's inequality, are also hugely influential.

3.6.3 Class and Socio-economic Group

Social class is a social ranking that is characterised by an individual's access to resources (Stellar, Manzo, Kraus and Keltner, 2012), including financial income, level of education and occupational status. The differences in social class are linked to the differences in the way individuals understand and interpret the environment that they live in and the impact it has on their lives (Kraus, Piff, and Keltner, 2009). Individuals in different social classes, especially the upper and middle classes, are recognised by the degree of resources or wealth that they have access to and the environment in which they live. This shapes their behaviour and interactions in a unique way (Kraus, Cote and Keltner, 2010). Social and environmental threat is reduced with increased material resources amongst the upper-class individuals and this provides greater independence. However, lower-class individuals are susceptible to different threats and external obstacles that affect their wellbeing and they have limited resources to address their needs (Kraus, Piff, and Moskowitz, 2018). This can lead to decisions that affect their lives and family, sometimes negatively. Stellar, Manzo, Kraus and Keltner (2012) explained that lower-class individuals are often conscious of how their environment affects their behaviour.

Andre and Godin (2014) in their study of child labour in Katanga, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) argued that most lower-class individuals view children's work as a means of contributing to the household economy and providing services to the community, while

children in the middle-class families are not expected to contribute to the family income. Ekpenyongi and Sibiri (2011) explained that the economic status of parents is linked to children being sent into the street to trade as children have to contribute to the family economy. In this way, socio-cultural values and class interact.

Social status also influences the reproductive behaviour of women. This includes the use of contraceptives and the number of births/children, as children are an economic asset for the poor because of their ability to work from an early age. Lamidi (2016) suggests that variations in the decision-making power of women across the different socio-cultural contexts in Nigeria need to be considered when introducing intervention programmes that aim at improving status. When women's status is improved, this can in turn reduce the need for child labour. Lamidi (2016) noted that variations in cultural practices across the different states and ethnic groups in Nigeria have implications for the participation of women and children in the labour force, economic contributions to the household, and the women's status within the household. Hence class and socio-cultural values are inter-linked.

There is considerable literature on poverty and how it influences child labour, but research on child labour has shown that beyond poverty, different individuals in the same social class may not necessarily take the same decision to send their children to trade. There are other nuances, such as socio-cultural factors, that can influence individuals' decisions, and this is relevant when child labour issues are being addressed as cultural values may intersect with income. Often people within the same class make different decisions and different values underpin the decisions made.

3.7 CHILD LABOUR IN NIGERIA

Child labour is part of a long-practised tradition in Nigeria which makes it a difficult issue to resolve. In 2006, the number of children who worked in Nigeria was estimated at 15 million, consisting of 10.68 per cent of the total population then of about 140 million (UNICEF, 2006), with no available records to show if the number of child labourers has since either increased or reduced. However, the population of Nigeria has recently been estimated to be about 170 million (ILO, 2014).

Nigerian children are involved in child labour in different places and settings and these are categorised into different economic activities that the children do, especially in urban areas. These activities include street/market hawking/trading/vending, shoe shining, car washing/watching, mechanical workshops, vulcanising, carpentry, scavenging, begging, hairdressing, tailoring, weaving, barbering and catering as well as children being involved as domestic servants and bus conductors (United States Department of Labour (USDOL), 2006). The different locations where Nigerian children work include public and semi-public places, private households, agricultural plantations and quarries. The work done in these places has been tabularised below. Records are available for only a percentage of children involved in some of the different work in the public and semi-public places, while data for private households (domestic servants) and agricultural plantations and quarries (farm and quarry workers) are unavailable. All these types of work are listed under the Nigerian Labour Act (1974) principle 59 as child labour but are not considered the worst forms.

Children involved in these labour activities are usually from lower class/low socio-economic groups and the children are often influenced by the financial hardship within the household. Yet child labour is also a long traditional practice within the country.

Table 3: Types of Child Labour in Public and Semi-Public Places of Work

Public places (Streets and Markets)		Semi-public places (Cottages, Industries and Mechanic workshops)	
Forms of child labour	% of children that work	Forms of child labour	% of children that work
Street Vendors/Hawkers/Traders	64%	Vulcanisers	24%
Beggars	13%	Hairdressers/Barbers	18%
Feet washers	8%	Tailors/Weavers	14%
Car washers/Watchers	6%	Carpenters	14%
Scavengers	5%	Bus conductors	17%
Shoe shiners	4%	Caterers	8%

Source: Information Sheet on Child Labour, UNICEF Nigeria (2006)

The above table sourced from UNICEF information sheet report (2006) illustrates the different forms of child labour occurring in public and semi-public places within Nigerian urban cities. Table 3 shows that of all the different forms of child labour listed, at 64 per cent street/market hawkers/traders/vendors have the highest percentage of children that work. A similar study of child labour in Zaria, Nigeria, conducted by Aliyu (2006) also found that hawking (vending/trading) was the most common type of work that children do as child labourers with 48.5 per cent, compared to mechanics, tailors, carpenters and house girls with 20.4, 9.8, 9.5 and 6 per cent respectively.

Ashimolowo, Aromolaran, and Inegbedion's (2010) study on child trading activities in the streets and their impact on the children's educational achievements revealed that the percentage of children that hawk/trade was the highest in the study, with 40.8 per cent participation as compared to other forms of trading such as carrying of loads which was undertaken by 20.0 per cent of the children in the study. Additionally, in a recent study of the health and educational consequences of child labour across the different states in Nigeria, Agbo (2017) described hawking/trading as the highest percentage of the different dimensions (forms) of child labour with a 32 per cent occurrence, compared to begging (28 per cent), working in agricultural sites (12 per cent), carrying of loads for customers (10 per cent) and domestic services (18 per cent). Research on child labour in the form of child trading has often been centred on the streets (Fetuga, Njokama, and Olowu, 2005; Nduka and Duru, 2014), with few studies incorporating streets, shops and markets (Okoli, 2014; Agbo, 2017) and less focus on the market space. This research is, however, centred on the experiences of children who trade within a market space as there is a gap on this area in the literature.

Many Nigerian children are exposed to long hours of work (as much as 12 hours a day) in unhealthy and dangerous environments, where they are saddled with too many responsibilities for their age (Aliyu, 2006; Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun, 2014; Nduka and Duru, 2014). The rights of children are violated when they are forced to work in hazardous conditions, where there is shortage of food (or no food at all), where they are offered little or no pay, no form of adequate education and a lack of health facilities (Aliyu, 2006). UNICEF (2006) reported that most children in Nigeria have always worked and the figures have continued to rise significantly for decades. The report further explained that

the ending of the oil boom towards the end of the 1970s with the increase in the poverty rate of the average Nigerian, drove millions of Nigerian children into labour activities.

Although children have always been working in Nigeria, there has been a major increase in the number over the past three decades (UNICEF, 2006; Amao and Oni, 2012). According to a UNICEF report, millions of Nigerian children have been driven into labour due to the increasing poverty in the country despite the nation's economic growth. In addressing this social problem, Bass (2004) and Okoli and Cree (2012) criticised the United Nations charter on the Rights of the Child's approach for failing to address the difficult social conditions in which children from developing countries live.

The first national survey on child labour in Nigeria (Modular Child Survey, 2000) generated statistical information which was expected to be used in the planning, formulation and implementation of a multi-sectoral, integrated intervention by the Nigerian government. This was to be achieved by monitoring the implementation and assessing the impact of policies and programmes, but it is apparent that even with the different programmes set up, child labour remains prevalent in Nigeria (USDOLBILA, 2013).

A quantitative study by Omokhodion and Uchendu (2010), of parents of school-aged children in an urban community in the south-western region of Nigeria, determined the factors that are related to child labour cum child trading and attitudes towards child labour in the community. Fifty percent of the respondents to the study said that their school-aged children worked; and the reasons given were to complement the family income, to gain experience and to assist in the family business. It was suggested that measures needed to control child labour in Nigeria should take a multifaceted approach including addressing household poverty through poverty alleviation, public enlightenment about the consequences of child trading especially for mothers, and free compulsory education to junior secondary school level (Omokhodion and Uchendu, 2010).

Similarly, in a survey study of 225 children on their perception of child labour in a large market in an urban community in the southwest of Nigeria, Omokhodion, Omokhodion, and Odusote (2006) found that 46 per cent of the children in the survey thought children should not work. When questioned about the benefits of working, while 36 per cent of the children felt that work provided a source of income for them, 23 per cent considered it was

a means to help their parents and 17 per cent thought it would help them to grow to become responsible adults. The researchers observed that the children perceived the negative effects of child labour to include socialising with deviant individuals, ill health and road traffic accidents. The authors' conclusion was that child labour is a sign of deprivation, especially in terms of educational attainment; for them, therefore, the priority should be school education for children even when the harsh economic realities in the children's families may force their parents to send them to trade (Omokhodion, Omokhodion, and Odusote, 2006). Promoting school education over child trading amidst harsh economic realities can be advantageous only if the socio-cultural conditions of parents and the social security of children are considered, as these are directly related to household vulnerability (ILO, 2010; Bahar, 2014). This illustrates the importance of the socio-economic factors influencing child labour, however, the socio-economic conditions do not completely explain the reason for the persistent prevalence of child labour and whether children are more receptive to trading or not. Beyond the social security aspect of child trading, there is a need to also address the socio-cultural conditions that normalise child trading. One way of making this possible is to inform parents of the rights of their children to education, play and leisure as social security will be made available for children on the condition that children are not sent to trade.

In a study of 500 children in three states, Lagos, Kaduna and Port Harcourt, investigation showed that 34.4 per cent, the highest percentage of children found in the street, who seek to develop various coping strategies during their economic activities, were children that trade (Oyeniyi and Agunbiade, 2009). Other economic activities in the study included alms begging (16.4 per cent), street gangs, theft, robbery and drug pushing (the percentage of children's involvement was unspecified in the survey). They concluded that policies directed at solving the issue should involve community-based strategies. For such strategies to be realistic there is a need to research the perceptions of different stakeholders that make up the community.

In a study of the prevalence, types and demographic features of child labour among school children in the southwest of Nigeria, Fetuga, Njokama, and Olowu's (2005) findings revealed that the most dominant economic activity of children that work is street/market trading, while culture and tradition were identified as factors that contribute to the

prevalence of child labour. It was concluded that it was necessary to examine all the issues relating to child labour due to its complex nature so that there could be appropriate planning and so children who are in school could be protected. This brings to the fore the socially constructed expectations, in the community studied, of the economic contribution of children to the household in particular and the community at large.

In another study of 20 nomadic girls involved in street hawking in three cities in northern Nigeria, the findings revealed that poverty was one of the main reasons for the economic activity (Usman, 2010). Other reasons given were religious factors where the girls prepare for self-reliance through religious study (as the Islamic religion demands that girls have savings) in preparation for early marriage; economic independence for personal maintenance, supporting the family financially; as well as socialisation so that they can get suitors as future husbands. Usman (2010) concluded that there is need for government to provide a social policy on girls' education and that their parents be given the opportunity to be educated through attending adult education classes.

Okoli and Cree's (2012) survey of children's work and their experiences in street vending in Enugu, Nigeria, maintained that vending (trading) is an essential part of children's everyday lives which is not separate from other areas of family life. This implies that trading is socially constructed as part of childhood. Whilst parents consider trading as part of growing up for their children, children view it as part of their responsibility to provide for the family. Okoli and Cree (2012) concluded that attention should be focused on the perspectives of the children on what they think and how they can get support and be protected within the environment in which they work. The opinion of children should therefore be considered when policies concerning them are formulated.

3.7.1 Nigerian Government Efforts towards the Elimination of Child Labour

The fight against child labour in different countries across the globe has progressed unevenly, with the least progress made in the Sub-Saharan region which has moved very slowly (UCW Report, 2007). The Report by the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) Modular Child Labour Survey 2000/2001 through the international labour organisation, on the prevalence of child labour in Nigeria, states that from the 1970s, the intensity of child labour became very high (ILO/FOS, 2001). To reduce this and to make progress in raising

awareness of the problem of child labour in the country from that period, sensitisation programmes were organised across the nation. For example, there have been frequent reports of these issues in the mass media (Awosola and Omoera, 2008) and policies and laws have been formulated by the government, designed to curb its incidence and prevalence. One example is the Nigerian Child Rights Acts which are part of the Nigerian Labour Acts that prohibit the economic activities of children especially during school hours.

The pre-independence government in the colonial era also gave much attention to child labour and child rights issues as demonstrated in the Children and Young Persons Act 1943, which legislated on the rights of the child and children's protection against any form of exploitation. This was later contained in the Nigerian constitutional provision (CRIN, 2011). Moreover, in the 1960s, four ILO conventions prohibiting children from working in various occupations and conditions that were hazardous were ratified (see FOS, 2002). The government stance towards addressing the issue of child labour was to take decisive legal action (demonstrated in the enactment of the Labour Code in 1974) with several provisions to limit the age at which children are employed in various occupations, such as coal mining and industrial work; and to limit the number of hours that children engage in work that exposes them to hazards (FOS, 2002).

In 1992, the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was established by ILO and is currently active in 86 countries. The organisation is more prominent, globally, than any other organisation that deals with children's issues across the world and its specific function is to address the problem of child labour. It is also active in raising public awareness, to counter the widespread perception developing countries have about work being good for children, stressing that of the estimated 211 million working children (4-15yrs) in 2000, more than 88 per cent were engaged in harmful child labour activities (Clark, 2011). The main aim of creating IPEC was to eradicate child labour progressively throughout the world, especially in its worst forms. Efforts towards the achievement of this aim have been made through various means which include country-based programmes that promote policy reform, capacity building of institutions and putting concrete measures in place to terminate child labour (ILO, 2000). Nigeria is an active member of IPEC and a memorandum of understanding was signed with ILO in 1999 to launch programmes under IPEC.

One of the programmes launched under IPEC in Nigeria is The National Steering Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (USDOLBILA, 2015). This was formed to serve as the country's mechanism for coordinating efforts in combating child labour. The different government ministries/departments represented on the Steering Committee include the Ministries of Labour and Productivity (MOLP), whose function is to ensure that the federal labour laws are enforced, and Women's Affairs and Social Development, where Child Development also functions as a department. The department is expected to check on the excesses of children's exploitation.

In the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, social development policies were formulated under the Family and Social Welfare department, which involved objectives that had an indirect impact on ameliorating the welfare of children who work. One such objective among those reflecting the goals of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is to:

Minimise the incidence and the prevalence of different types of child abuse/child labour in society with a view to eliminating the phenomenon eventually.

Article 32 of UNCRC (1989) instructs that states' parties should recognise the child's right to be protected from engaging in economic activities that involve any work that may be hazardous or that may interfere with the child's education and may be physically, mentally, spiritually, morally or socially harmful to the overall development of the child in relation to his/her health. This was ratified and signed into law in 1991 and represented a positive move by the government to fight child labour in order to challenge and eliminate the phenomenon (FOS, 2002). Section 59 of Nigeria's Labour Act specifically documents punishments for such offences as trading by children and other similar crimes related to labour. Unfortunately, these offences continue as it appears that the regulations guarding against such activities are either not implemented or punishment is not commensurate with the offence committed, to the extent that when bills are passed in the House of Representatives, they are either disregarded, or not effectively enforced (LeVan and Ukata, 2012). Moreover, some of the prohibited activities are inappropriately being grouped under family business which is regarded as light work, because the law does not prohibit children participating in light work in the family business (Labour Act Section 59(1)).

Although Nigeria 's Labour Act has been criticised for the weak penalty it levied, (a fine of one hundred naira, forty UK pence), against parents and employers who violate the law on child labour, this fine has recently been increased to fifty thousand naira which is equivalent to £100.00 (Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2014). Alongside this law, however, there is a need for monitoring, observation and assessment of what is in place so that intervention is effective (Berckmans, Velasco, Tapia, and Loots, 2012). Moreover, it is imperative to ensure that the sanctions provided for the violation of legislation are sufficiently severe to serve as a deterrent (ILO, 2010).

The Nigerian government has tried to minimise the prevalence of child labour through various initiatives towards tackling poverty. Nigeria is regarded as one of the poorest countries in the world, with over 80 million (64 per cent) of her population living below poverty line (UN Report, 2016). The poverty rate in Nigeria has been consistently increasing for decades, which has led to various governments in power designing different programmes in tackling the challenge. These have not been achievable because the programmes were politically motivated and most of the beneficiaries were party members, who had a stake in them. Moreover, there was no appropriate coordination of the programmes between the three tiers of government and the poor people targeted (Ibrahim and Ladan, 2014). Ibrahim and Ladan (2014) argued that none of the efforts made by the government were centred on the establishment of small-scale enterprises to promote economic growth and supplement the income of household members. Moreover, the lack of a welfare system to support people has also continued to affect the economic conditions of the population.

However, different policies and programmes have been designed at different times to address the increasing rate of poverty. Among these was the development of three principles in handling poverty based on The World Development Report (2000/2001). The principles are:

- Promoting opportunity: People in poverty consistently emphasise the importance of having the basic material opportunities like jobs, good roads, constant electricity, water, schools, markets for the sales of their produce and health services. Policies encouraging enhancement and promoting assets were introduced into various ministries for this purpose.

- Facilitating individual empowerment: The outcome of poverty can be significantly affected by the social norms, values and the customary practices of the family, the community or the market. Women and the socially disadvantaged are excluded from the social issues and decisions that will contribute to community development by the norms of the society. A difference can be made by the poor by organising themselves in defending their rights, taking advantage of market opportunities and protecting themselves from risks. This has been achieved through establishing social institutions such as community banks to create opportunities for individuals to access loans for self-employment.
- Enhancing the security of poorer communities: The risk of unforeseen events, such as war, diseases, violence, natural disaster and economic imbalance through the provision and improvement of infrastructural facilities, like hospital equipment, better sanitation and security kits for various security bodies like the army, the navy and the police force (World Development Report, 2000/2001).

Prior to the development of these three principles, from the mid-1970s onwards, major concerns about the human cost and consequences of poverty challenges in the country have led the government to develop various means of solving the problem of poverty. Many laudable programmes were introduced by various governments in the country at different times (Idachaba, 2006). Such programmes include:

- Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), established in 1976 to increase the production of local food, so that food importation can be reduced.
- The Green Revolution was established in 1980 to improve the production of food, livestock and fish.
- The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was established in 1986 to reform Nigeria's foreign exchange system, trade policies, business and agricultural regulations.
- The Better Life Programme (BLP), which was initially referred to as the Better Life Programme for Rural Women, was established in 1987 and its main objective then was *to empower rural women*. The name was later changed to incorporate urban women and men in both rural and urban communities. Its main objectives were: *To enhance labour productivity, develop entrepreneurship, educate women on health and raise the awareness of women about their rights*.
- The Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) was established in 1993 *to address the economic need of the Nigerian rural women* (Ugoh and Ukpere, 2009).

- The Directorates of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) were established in 1996 with the objectives of promoting a framework for grass roots social mobilisation, provision of development, monitoring and performance evaluation programmes, provision of accessible roads and potable water and improvement of rural sanitation and potable water.
- The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was set up in 1996 mainly for self-enterprise and self-empowerment with emphasis on self-employment instead of wage employment.
- The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), founded in 2001, focuses on *the provision of strategy for the eradication of absolute poverty in the country* (Ugoh and Ukpere, 2009; Okpanachi, 2011).

The National Poverty Eradication Programme's (NAPEP) main objective was to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people, especially in rural areas. This was developed from a well-structured organisational framework known as the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), established in 2000 (Aliyu, 2001; Gummwa, 2002; Joseph, 2005). Most of these programmes were established during the different military regimes that were then in power (Ugoh and Ukpere, 2009).

The Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was established to address the problem of rising unemployment and crime rates especially among youth in the country. The primary objectives were to:

- Reduce the problem of unemployment.
- Increase the productivity of the economy.
- Reduce the crime rate in the country.

From 2004 to 2007, attempts were made by the Nigerian government to establish and implement other economic reform programmes through a Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) based reform strategy programme. These included the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), which is subdivided into the State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) that was *to empower individuals through the state government* and the Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS) which was *to empower individuals through the local government* (Okpanachi, 2011). NEEDS is centred on strategy and policy direction that focuses on *tackling poverty through creating wealth and jobs, expanding social safety nets and eradicating corruption*. Despite these robust policies and legislative rules initiated by past

and current Nigerian governments, especially with regards to child protection¹⁵, in general there is weakness in the rule of law and its implementation (Ogunniyi, 2018). Investments in national and community-based child protection mechanisms and services are minimal.

In order to help reduce the ever-increasing prevalence of child labour/trading in the country, Understanding Children's Work (UCW, 2014), the United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF, 2011), (in its most recent collaboration with the government of Nigeria to reduce and possibly eradicate child labour), has focused on teaching and learning practices to implement different strategies, in order to improve the overall wellbeing of the child with the aim of improving school quality, increasing the number of educational institutions, and strengthening education management information systems in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2011). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funds a Literacy Enhancement Assistance Programme (LEAP) where teacher training and community participation is being supported with the use of educational data in developing school budgets and policies in some major states in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2011).

The United States Department of Labour (2006) reported that the Nigerian regulations, policies and laws centred on child labour are regularised at the Nigerian local, state and federal levels by various institutions. The Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity oversees the coordination of all efforts in combating child labour through a specific department that supervises what is done and this includes a Child Labour Unit. As of the time of the report in 2006, the Ministry had 318 Labour Officers and Inspectors, 80 of whom were trained in child labour issues (USDL, 2006). The United States Department of Labour reported that the initiatives of the Nigerian government to reduce the incidence of child labour have not been effective because inspectors in charge are unable to function due to lack of adequate funds, the problem of transportation, and lack of incentives and training. It further emphasised the resistance of employers, children and families as contributing to the prevalence of child labour. The department also explained that the only available report submitted by the Nigerian government through the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs to UNCRC was the country's report on violence against children in 2004.

¹⁵ Nigeria has ratified the International Labour Organisation Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and other related conventions, and the Children's Rights Bills and Law against Children and Women Trafficking have been passed under the child protection rule.

This perhaps reveals the non-seriousness and the lack of political will on the part of the government to address the issue of child labour and other related problems in the country. While policies addressing these challenges are regularised by the government, there is difficulty in implementing the policies.

Similarly, various legislative and institutional measures were established and enacted in Nigeria at both Federal and State levels which aimed to address different types of violence against children. Institutions charged with child protection issues established at the federal level include National and State Child Rights Implementation Committees, Child Development Departments in the Federal and State Ministries of Women's Affairs, and the National Council of Child Rights Advocates of Nigeria. At the State level legislation includes: the law against harmful traditional practices against children and women in Ebonyi State, the female genital mutilation law, the criminal code amendment law in Edo State, the prohibition of hawking/trading edict of 1985 CAP 58 in Bauchi State and the prohibition of girl child marriage and female circumcision law of 2000 in Cross River State (Mfrekemfon and Ebirien, 2015).

The numerous studies undertaken by national and international organisations have confirmed that child labour prevalence is exacerbated by an increase in poverty, limited educational opportunity, and socio-cultural factors that constrain the social position of children, especially children who work (ILO, 1996; Miljeteig, 2000; Black, 2003). Laws against the employment of children have failed because they have not addressed these motivating and driving factors (Bass, 2004). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) recognises that a legal approach on its own is not enough in addressing child labour (Deaton, 2018). The organisation acknowledged that legislation is important because it helps to establish norms and standards and is often the necessary first step to dealing with social issues. Laws are ineffective if they are not backed by effective enforcement, anchored in the socio-economic and cultural realities, or flexible enough to account for actions by governments and NGOs (Bequele and Boyden, 1988). Enforcing effective laws in addressing child labour issues will need a systematic approach so that each form of child labour can be distinguished from another; for example, child trading and artisanal small-scale miners entail differing degrees of risk (Omokhodion, Omokhodion, and Odusote,

2010; Laird, 2012). But when child labour issues are being addressed internationally and locally, these differences are often not acknowledged.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

I have reviewed various issues that exacerbate child labour prevalence, including how child labour is conceptualised and defined both globally and locally. I have expanded on the definition of child labour as based on the categorisation of work undertaken by children as either hazardous or not, which contributes to its complexity. The causes and determinants of child labour were also explored. Efforts which have yielded no positive results towards the elimination of the phenomenon within the Nigerian context were also highlighted.

Areas of child labour that are specific to the research were discussed, where parental power within the household that encourages the prevalence of child trading was examined. The socio-cultural determinants of child labour within the Nigerian context were also explored. Finally, child labour in Nigeria was discussed extensively, drawing on its prevalence and various efforts made by the Nigerian government towards reducing/eradicating the phenomenon, and how all efforts have yielded few or no positive outcomes.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter explores the methodological underpinnings for the study. The rationale for the choice of methodology, and methods of data collection and analysis are described to give a vivid understanding of the processes and the order in which events took place. The design of the research is then discussed, identifying the challenges encountered in choosing the right methodology. This is followed by elaboration on the different aspects of the chosen methodology and how the challenges were addressed. The philosophical basis of the research is also presented, while presentation of the ethical considerations and the value base of the study conclude this chapter.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest challenges in this research was selecting a methodology that is suitable for investigating children in the adult world. The methodology chosen sought to apply already established methods to innovative areas of enquiry and to offer originality in the research process. Most research on children has been based on quantitative surveys (Greig, Taylor, and MacKay, 2007; Christensen and James, 2008); other recent research based on qualitative study has been centred on pedagogical process (Waller, 2011). However, this is an exploratory study that seeks to understand and gain knowledge of how children, in the context of child trading, are culturally influenced by the decision-making process of their parents and how the lives of the children who trade are affected by this economic activity. To achieve these goals, a methodology that gives voice to the children on their perception of the economic activity they do and on their lived experiences was used. There is a dearth of research that utilises a qualitative case study approach.

In this research, the socio-cultural contributions of child labour, and in particular, child trading, were investigated using a qualitative case study approach. Qualitative research produces comprehensive, in-depth information by seeking to understand the lived experiences of people and their interpretation and perception of life events (Key, 1997). Data within a precise situation in a case study can be carefully examined by a researcher and detailed information

about the subject under investigation can be obtained (Zainal, 2007). I employed a case study approach as this enabled me fully to explore and examine the lived experiences of children who are involved in trading in Oba market, Benin City, Nigeria. This allowed me to incorporate and embrace multiple perspectives from various participant groups so that a detailed and comprehensive story could be constructed (Neale, Thapa, and Boyce, 2006). The approach helped to obtain in-depth information and gain a fuller picture of the impact of cultural values to child trading.

When researchers bring their holistic understanding and views to a research study, it aids in the process and writing of the research. The philosophical assumptions and methodological choices made at the beginning of the research process are very important in shaping the overall quality of the research produced. This will determine the degree to which and by whom the research findings are accepted as a valued contribution to the subject at hand (Ritchie and Lewis, 2010).

4.3 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

Research philosophy is defined as knowledge development and the nature of that knowledge in a given subject area (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009). Understanding the philosophical paradigms underlying research methodology is important (Crossan, 2003). Crossan, citing Easterby-Smith (1997), identified three reasons for this:

- i. The researcher will be able to refine the research methods and clarity is also given to the methods that are used in the study, which helps the researcher gather evidence and also helps to answer the research questions.
- ii. Being knowledgeable about research philosophy enables and assists researchers with various types of methodology which will help them to avoid inappropriate and unrelated works.
- iii. Understanding the meanings, advantages and benefits of research philosophy helps researchers to be more creative and explorative in their methods of researching area(s) of interest or topic(s) which may be outside their experience.

The attempts at interpreting a phenomenon in relation to the meanings that individual participants bring to it in their natural settings is a dominant focus of qualitative researchers (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). A research paradigm that contains significant assumptions about

how the world is viewed by human beings was recommended by Denzin and Lincoln (2000). The assumptions form the basis for the research strategy in this study and helped me to determine appropriate methods. Crossan (2003) noted that the components of a qualitative research paradigm encourage in-depth thinking because of the indirect and circular style of questioning, and in the process, generate further questions about the topic studied. Research paradigm components help in clarifying assumptions that relate to personal values or beliefs which are considered helpful in the planning of a research study. Knowledge of the philosophical approach is considered useful in the process of inquiry because it helps to inform the methods appropriate for the study.

In the methodological approach utilised in this study, I explored in depth, perspectives from different stakeholders, in order to increase the understanding of the decision-making process of parents in sending their children to trade. The research recognised the presence of various contradictory realities among different participants and explored the context that surrounds and informs them. To achieve this, a research framework based on a social construction, built on the knowledge of the child rights within the complex issue of child labour/trading, was chosen. The study explored various constructs, based on experiences and dependent on what individuals and groups identified with (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The methodological approach helped in the research paradigm that clarifies the research design used in this study. This improved the quality and sophistication of the evidence obtained during the process of investigation, and also helped in the interpretation of the evidence and in answering the basic research questions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Clarifying the research design simplified the evaluation of the overall investigation.

Saunders et al. (2009) and Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (2002) emphasised two major branches of philosophy in the understanding of knowledge, which are ontology and epistemology; while Creswell (2012) and Heron and Reason (1997) included axiology as a relevant philosophical assumption that researchers need to bring to their inquiry process. These different levels of knowledge are explored in the next section.

4.3.1 The Ontological Stance

Ontology deals with the nature of reality or being and raises questions on researchers' assumptions about the way the world operates and how committed they are to their views (Saunders et al., 2009; Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Creswell, 2012). Ontological underpinnings in positivism, with the foundation on scientific enquiry, views the world as external, objective and independent of social actors. In practice, this is often linked to and reflects a quantitative approach to research. The ontological underpinning in interpretivism holds that social phenomena are subjective and shape the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors concerned with their existence (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). This usually reflects a qualitative approach to research and suggests reality as socially constructed.

Ontologically, this study is based on an interpretive perspective in that the beliefs and values of parents are internal, subjective and socially constructed. My interest is to describe and explain how what exists in the social domain has effect on the social issues that are being investigated. The knowledge and understanding of these issues are expected to aid in intervention processes which may contribute to changing the views of the actors in the phenomenon under investigation (Hughes, 2007). This will contribute to the understanding of the implications of the decisions taken by parents which can be utilised in the care and support of children that trade.

4.3.2 The Epistemological Stance

Epistemology examines the branch of philosophy that deals with the origins of knowledge, and rests upon a 'first principle' which is a key concept that helps one to understand what knowledge is, where it comes from, and how it is organised (Fite, 2012). Epistemology also constitutes 'accepted' knowledge in a field of study (Saunders et al., 2009). Interpretive epistemology is applied when researchers closely involve themselves in the research with the participants that are being studied; the evidence that is gathered is subjective and has to do with the views of different individuals in such a way that knowledge is acquired through recording the subjective experiences of those individuals (Creswell, 2012). The epistemological underpinnings in positivism rest on the view that only phenomena that are observable can provide credible data or 'facts' and through this, causality can be identified. In

contrast, the interpretive view focuses on meanings and social interactions between people who are the subjects (Creswell, 2012). I argue that the epistemological underpinnings in this study are based on an interpretive perspective, and the methodological design applied explores in depth the participants' views of their social world as it relates to child trading.

4.3.3 The Axiological Stance of the Researcher

This branch of philosophy studies human values that enable individuals to identify the internal value systems influencing their perceptions, decision-making and behaviours so that it can be clearly understood why different individuals do what they do (Creswell, 2012; Heron and Reason, 1997). Axiology considers values which are based on judgement (Saunders et al., 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) argued that to achieve credible research results, researchers' values play significant roles in different stages of the research process. They explained that all human actions are guided by their values and maintained that researchers are able to demonstrate their axiological skills through their ability to make judgements about the explicit values they place in the research they conduct and how such research is conducted.

The axiological assumptions within positivism are that researchers should be in an objective, value-free position where the researcher stands independent of the data that is collected. In the interpretive view, the researcher has a subjective stance and is value-bound as s/he is part of the research. A reflection of the researcher's value is shown in the choice of philosophical approach s/he decides to adopt, which in turn is reflected in the choice of data collection and techniques. My background experience and knowledge are relevant and need to be taken into consideration in this study. I acknowledge that I am part of the research process and therefore have a subjective view that is interpretative in nature. The research is value-bound because I had the opportunity to reflect on my traditional experiences as a child and was able to look critically into the issue as a parent and as a researcher. This helped my understanding of the perspectives of both the child that is involved in trading activity and the parents who take the decision to send their children to trade. Viewing myself as part of the research process helped me to articulate my feelings about my ability to take an emic and/or etic stance as an instrument of research which, in turn, led to transparency in the research process (as proposed by Hoare, Buetow, Mills, and Francis, 2013). In their view, Hoare et al. (2013) argued that researchers often struggle to assume the etic role of observing and interviewing participants at the same

time as adopting an emic position of trying to bring understanding into the lived experiences of participants.

Drawing from various philosophical stances discussed above, I acknowledge that the study under investigation integrates various assumptions. However, given that my explicit consideration of cultural values informed me as part of the research process, I therefore cannot separate myself from the research. This makes the research subjective with an interpretive approach. Moreover, the value base of this research brings to the fore the design of the study, which is to collect data based on how cultural values influence parents' decisions in sending their children to trade and how the trading activity has impacted on the lives of the children. The next section gives a detailed exploration of the methodological approach utilised in this study.

4.4 THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.4.1 Qualitative Research

Social sciences developed qualitative research methods to take account of the fact that unlike the physical sciences, the subject matter of social sciences (people) are thinking individuals and groups who impose meanings on the world and express agency, making choices about what to think and how to act (Thomas, 2010). This is based on their capacity to reflect on situations and choose from a range of possible options in response to the social and cultural phenomena that are being studied by researchers. The methodological paradigm suitable for any piece of research will need to be decided by the nature, the context and the purpose of the research in question (Thomas, 2010).

Qualitative approaches are often appropriate for inductive research which may entail a flexible and contextual approach. This is required especially when a new phenomenon is being studied, which may be barely known, or when one is seeking to gain insight into the subjective meanings of a phenomenon (Hughes, 2006; Rubin and Babbie, 2008).

Qualitative research frequently takes place in a natural setting or environment (Marshall, 1999). It aims to provide an in-depth investigation into phenomena and elicit meanings from them. This can involve studying people in their daily natural and normal activities. Qualitative

research has no single, acceptable approach, but is carried out by researchers based on various factors. These include beliefs about the nature of the world, the purpose and goal of the research, what characterises the research participants and what characterises the researchers themselves in their position as researchers and in relation to their environment (Simons, 2009). It is a method that addresses research questions that need to explain or understand a social phenomenon and its context. There are, however, some common elements associated with qualitative research (Ritchie and Lewis, 2010), which include:

- i. The aim of the research being directed to provide in-depth understanding and interpretation of the social world of the research participants through information about their experiences and perspectives;
- ii. Data collection often involving intimate relationship between the researcher and the research participants, with detailed, informative, rich and extensive data;
- iii. Analysis emerging in conceptual ideas producing descriptive details and classifications, and identifying patterns with and within explanation;
- iv. Output that focuses on the interpretation of social meanings by the mapping and representation of the research participants' social world (Ritchie and Lewis, 2010).

In this study, exploring in depth the lived experiences of the children aids in interpreting their social world through providing them with the opportunity to tell their story in the way it is experienced and how they are affected by it. The perception of other participants including parents and social workers also contributes to collecting useful and relevant data, especially as it relates to how cultural values influence the decision-making process of parents, and children's rights, which are equally important issues in this study.

Qualitative research gives a rich explanation of complex phenomena. The disadvantage of the approach is that the data collection and analysis can take time and can be expensive. Another disadvantage is that the samples of participants are generally very small, which makes the findings not easily transferable or generalisable (Rahman, 2016).

However, in this study, my interest is not in measuring or collecting statistics about the children involved in trading at Oba market; rather, I am seeking to understand the experiences of those children who trade and how the cultural values of their parents have informed their

parents' decisions in sending them (children) to trade. This can only be achieved through using an appropriate approach such as qualitative methods to collect rich and detailed data.

4.5 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach represents the structures that guide the implementation of a research design, the research methods and the subsequent data analysis (Bryman, 2004). As such, it is when phenomena are studied at a point in time. A case study approach is being proposed for this research project, the main purpose of which is to explore meticulously the unique nature of a single case or a phenomenon in a multiple case in order to compare the phenomenon in separate settings (Simons, 2009). This illuminates the larger socio-cultural forces in detail while exploring many variables of interest, focusing specifically on individuals directly or indirectly involved in that case, providing detailed information on the issue under investigation (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Also the use of a case study approach helped me to focus on a detailed account of the children's experiences from their own perspective. This is important because the absence of accounts of the lived experiences of children that are involved in trading, which is a common activity among children in the southern region of Nigeria, is very significant, and they are scarce in the literature. My study addressed this limitation.

Although various qualitative approaches were considered as a potential methodology for the study, these approaches (Phenomenology, Ethnography and Participatory Action Research) were rejected in favour of a case study methodology.

4.5.1 Case Study Design

An instrumental case study approach was utilised to gather information for the study as it was considered the most appropriate way to engage with the issue being investigated. This is because the research is situated in a particular location and the issue being investigated is directly linked to that situation. While the study investigates how socio-cultural factors influence parents' decision-making processes in sending their children to trade, the investigation takes place in a market space.

A case study can be broad, ranging from a detailed investigation of a single individual or group to the study of a whole institution or community; even among institutions and communities,

there may be a range of cases to be examined (Stake, 2000). A case study utilises a qualitative or quantitative approach, and often combines both. What defines a case study is the holistic approach it utilises (Yin, 2003). Its aims are to capture the entire details of an individual or a group, an institution, a community or a society. To achieve this purpose, a case study relies on multiple sources of data which may include interviews, observations, video and audio tapes, documents and artefacts (Schell, 1992). The aim of the different methods is to capture the meanings that the different participants attach to their experiences.

According to Simon (2011), authors such as Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2004), Stake (1995) and Merriam (1988) have argued that case studies have different meanings for different people and in different disciplines. They characterise the case study in relation to other approaches in social research where a specific form of inquiry that is distinct from the experiment or social survey is identified. Simon (2011) further explained that other authors begin the definition of case study by indicating what the approach is not. An example was given of Adelman et al. (1980) and Merriam (1988) distinguishing a case study from observational studies, a historical case study, case work, case methods, case history or case work in social work and medicine (Simon, 2011).

Case study design and application can vary widely. Stake (2000) explained that a case study could be analytical or holistic and could be studied naturally or culturally in a specific location, while Schell (1992) contends that a case study can be used for the purpose of exploring, describing and explaining. The approach is used to reduce the wide range of a research field into an easier and less complicated research topic. However, while a case study can have a strong and relevant impact on any aspect of a community's social issues, it is not generalisable to a whole population or community.

4.5.1.1 Types of Case Study

A case study can be classified into three types: intrinsic, instrumental, and multiple or collective (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Stake, 2005). The different types and meanings are tabulated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Types of case study

Types of Case Study	Definition
<i>Intrinsic case study</i>	Undertaken by a researcher mainly because the researcher is interested in a particular case or phenomenon and wants a better understanding of it. This type of case only represents a particular topic of interest.
<i>Instrumental case study</i>	This is when a case is studied to gain more insight into an issue. In this study, it is not the case itself that is of interest to the researcher, but rather the understanding of the issues that are associated with that case or phenomenon.
<i>Collective case study</i>	This is when several cases are studied together in order to explore and understand the common characteristics. These cases do not necessarily have to be similar to one another but are selected for the study because understanding them will help the researcher interpret a large collection of cases.

Stake (2005) emphasised contextualising knowledge production from particular cases and thus stresses two types of case study out of the three tabulated above, the intrinsic and the instrumental case studies. Stake (2005) explains that in an instrumental case study, the case is chosen because investigating it will help in better understanding of the issues under investigation. I applied an instrumental case study approach in my research where the unit of analysis, which is Oba market and the economic activity that is undertaken by the children, is instrumental in understanding children's experiences within that environment. In the process I focus on how socio-cultural determinants of child labour contribute to child trading, which is also instrumental because the findings are linked to the goal of encouraging changing practices.

4.5.1.2 Strengths and Limitations of a Case Study Design

One of the key advantages of a case study design is that researchers are able to focus specifically on cases that are interesting. This could be through the testing of theories with typical cases or it may be to collect data about specific topics that are of interest. Research is thorough and note taking is carried out in a meticulous and systematic manner. Planning and designing are important in addressing issues in a case study design, through making sure that all collected data are relevant to the study (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003). Additionally, a case study may not be generalisable because of the propensity to report on a particular case but researchers can transfer knowledge to the audience by conducting a case study and a case can be used to compare other cases (Simons, 2009).

A case study approach is described as weak in rigour in that its focus is on process rather than end products that are measurable, because it relies on interpretive processes in the qualitative data rather than the statistical data of a quantitative approach (Yin, 2003). Case study research can involve the researcher over a period of time which could lead to what may be called an observer effect. The fact that the participants know that they are being observed may cause them to behave differently from their normal daily routine. There is also the issue of parental power and influence that is expected when children are interviewed in a case study approach within a community where parental power is imminent. Gaining access to participants in case study settings can be very challenging and demanding during the research process. Research can fail if the researcher is unable to gain access to the required participants or if permission is withheld, withdrawn, or if the researcher is forced to renegotiate. This can affect the time originally allocated for the research. These challenges occurred in my study when the group discussions were in process. While some of the participants were ready and prepared for the group discussions, others were not. On two occasions the day and time for the interviews had to be rescheduled and different days and a more convenient time for all participants was agreed on.

This research study demonstrates the characteristics of an instrumental case study framework which allows for more insight to be gained on the particular phenomena or situation that is being investigated. This case study framework is characterised by social constructivism which is concerned with exploring reality as negotiated in the lived experiences of individuals

through their interactions with each other and the environment in which they live, and through group discussions (James and James, 2008). To understand the diverse participants involved in the research, social constructivism was a sensible and logical choice for this study. It allowed each participant to acknowledge their background and their cultural orientation.

4.6 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

A social constructionist approach is the process of explaining the creation of knowledge as the product of interactions of individuals and sets of discourses (Gergen and Gergen, 2008; James and James, 2008; Burr, 2018). This takes place in the context of understanding the historical foundations and the cultural location of participants in the research (Creswell, 2007). Burr (2018) explained that the key foundations of a social constructionist approach rely on one or more of the following principles that are still useful to current researchers: a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, historical and cultural specificity and knowledge, social processes, and social action being related.

Social constructionism recognises knowledge as shaping human interactions and relationships rather than shaping individuals alone (Gergen and Gergen, 2008; Burr, 2018). Through such interactions and relationships knowledge is constructed. Social constructionism rejects the idea that researchers can remove themselves from the process of knowledge production and also rejects the viewpoint that there is ‘an objective truth waiting to be discovered’ (King and Horrocks, 2010:22). The key principles of social constructionism are that having knowledge of the world and understanding the people in it, is the result of the thoughts, languages, and interactions of the people rather than in the observed and defined outward reality (Burr, 2018). Knowledge is therefore generated through social exchanges.

Social constructionism is historically and culturally located and a study carried out in a particular location may, when using the same methods in a different location, produce different results (King and Horrocks, 2010). Social constructionism recognises the need to understand the experiences of people in their lived environment from their own perspective (Andrew, 2012). Although knowledge and relationships are socially constructed, this does not mean that anyone can construct knowledge. The power relationships in any given society means that some people are more able to construct ‘truths’ than others - this involves both ways of

knowing the world and ways of behaving. For example, Schulenberg and Cheniermany (2014), citing Becker (1967) in relation to crime argued that there is a 'hierarchy of credibility' to determine how reality is defined, who defines it and what it is, where some people's views are valued more than others. In this study, policy makers construct one form of knowledge (about what is best for children - they should be in school, not work) while the people in the community, construct another form (children should trade in the markets as it helps them develop into responsible adults).

Social constructionism emphasises reality as socially constructed. Understanding of what a person already knows and believes is socially constructed through interactions with events, ideas and activities that the person has contact with (Richardson, 1997). For example, the socially constructed beliefs that parents have about growing up from being a responsible child to becoming a responsible adult may inform their decision to involve their children in economic activities that can affect those children. Parental power is expressed when the rights of children are not considered as decisions are taken by parents for children to work.

Social constructionism acknowledges the negotiation of shared meanings through discussion and also recognises differing discussions between two people (James and James, 2008). It is concerned with the importance of collaboration with others (Draper, 2013), which provides the existence of multiple realities. I approached this research from a social constructionist perspective. The decision for such an approach from a social constructionist view was founded on a value-based philosophical stance. My previous experience as a child trader, a parent and more recently as a researcher enables me to understand child labour as a complex phenomenon that has different meanings for each of those involved. For example, my priorities and focus as a researcher who wants a 'positive' change in childhood experiences contrasts with that of the parent participants and the social work participants. My initial stance was that children should not be allowed to trade so that they can play and have leisure. However, the parents' and social work participants' perceptions of an ideal childhood were different. I came to realise that my view had to be put aside so that I could acquire the perceptions about child labour as it is being experienced by the children themselves and their parents. This is consistent with a social constructionist approach. In applying this, I focused on the views and experiences of the children themselves and the socio-cultural, socio-economic and political contexts in which they live. I also recognised the importance of the views and perspectives of parents who are

responsible for sending their children to trade and social workers whose responsibilities include the overall welfare of the children.

4.7 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

The study was conducted in Oba market, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. I conducted a pilot study eight months prior to collecting data for the main study. This helped me to check on the quality and efficacy of the research techniques and tools that were later used for the data collection and analysis in the main study. Earlier to the pilot study, I obtained ethical approval from Anglia Ruskin University Research Ethics Panel, UK and the University of Benin Ethics Committee in Nigeria.

4.7.1 The Pilot Study

Although there is no guarantee that a pilot study can bring success to a main study, it has been described as a crucial stage in a research design, because it can improve on the success of the main study (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). As a novice researcher, I needed to conduct a pilot study to gain knowledge and experience of the interview guides/instructions that may be used in the main study. This was to help me avoid specific interview guides that might be too complex for the main study and also help in the choice of wording, elimination of jargon and getting things in the right order. The pilot study data were not used for the main study; nor were any of the participants in the pilot study allowed to participate in the main study. This was to avoid any possibility of the data collected contaminating the main study.

The pilot study consisted of seven participants, including three children, two parents and two social workers. The children and parent participants were contacted by the community leader of Oredo local government area through the woman leader of the market, while the social workers were recruited by the Director of Child Development in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, with permission from the Honourable Commissioner of the Ministry. The gatekeepers, which included the market woman leader (supported by the community leader) and the Director of Child Development, organised a convenient time and place for the interviews. They also selected the participants for the study and informed them of their relevance to the research.

Letters of invitation and information were sent through the gatekeepers to parents and social workers recruited for the study. The children participants in the pilot study were also informed of the research through their parents and consent forms were required to be signed by the children prior to participating in the study. Information about the nature and purpose of the study was documented in the information sheet for circulation to all participants who were to be involved and the forms were to be signed by them. The letters of introduction also included relevant and important questions that were used in the interview, which was to allow participants to make an informed decision on whether to participate or not.

The participants agreed voluntarily to participate in the pilot study. Parents/guardians of child participants were also required to sign the informed consent form for their participating children while consent forms were administered to the child participants to obtain endorsement. With the help of the gatekeepers, I contacted each participant after I had received their acceptance forms to arrange a suitable place and time for interview. Data collected from all participants through in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim. Interview questions were framed around participants' perceptions and experiences of the issue of child trading as it relates to the cultural norms in the community and the impact it has on the children.

4.7.2 The Data Collection Procedure

The main study commenced immediately after the pilot study was analysed and its findings documented, with steps taken to correct and rectify the errors and omissions discovered in the research instruments during the pilot stage. One of the key rectifications was a change to the methods of data collection by including in-depth interviews with children.

4.7.2.1 Initial Plan

At the beginning of this research, my intention was to use only focus groups in generating information from the child participants. This was because of my initial fear of the power imbalance that I felt could affect the children in information sharing when interviewed individually by an adult like me. I assumed that I would be perceived as a parent figure by the children. However, after the pilot study, in which I utilised in-depth interviews for the selected child participants, I realised that my assumption and scepticism about in-depth interviews was

unfounded. I was able to understand the importance of in-depth interviews as an opportunity for the child to take full control of the situation without having any peer pressure to behave in a certain way or speak in a certain manner when the interview is on-going.

A qualitative data collection procedure was utilised throughout with a semi-structured interview and a focus group used to gather data. This combination allowed for the participants' socially constructed views and attitudes to be explored and also allowed for a rich and valid insight into the phenomena under investigation. Additionally, the socially constructed views of the key stakeholders (children, parents and social workers) about how cultural values influence the decision-making process of parents in sending their children to trade, were explored.

4.7.3 Sampling and Recruitment

The Director, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, the community leader and the woman market leader were the gatekeepers used for the selection of participants in the study. Using gatekeepers meant that I did not have any particular control over the samples. While it may have been possible for me to have a say in choosing children who will speak to me, as I was not seeking a representative sample of a particular focus of my research, this was not a significant problem. The gatekeepers were given detailed information on the type of participants needed for the study. It is possible that there may have been bias during the selection; however, it was important ethically to use the gatekeepers.

In-depth interviews were organised for a total of thirteen participants. Interviews were conducted with five children, four parents and four social workers. Three different group discussion sessions were also arranged. Participants in two of the sessions were a total of twelve children, with six children for each session (these children were not the same children that participated in the in-depth interview), while the third session involved five parents. These were also different from the parents that participated in the in-depth interview. All the children and the parent participants were recruited from within Oba market. The invitation process was conducted through the community leader who then contacted the woman market leader to select children and parents who met the inclusion criteria of the study in Table 6.

Social workers were recruited through the assistance of the Director of Child Development in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development. Protocol was duly followed in the selection of participants to meet with the inclusion criteria¹⁶. The woman market leader and the Director of the Department of Child Development (referred to as gatekeepers) were responsible for contacting the participants. Letters of introduction were addressed to the gatekeepers attaching the information sheets which were distributed to the participants. The information sheets gave insight into the purpose of the study and why the recruited participants were relevant to the study.

Table 5: Total Number of Participants

Participants	Number of participants in the In-depth Interviews	Number of participants in the Focus Group Discussion
Children	5	12 (6 in each group)
Parents	4	5
Social workers	4	-
Total Individual participants.	13	17

Table 6: Criteria for Inclusion

<p>Identification of Participants</p> <p>1. Children between the age of 10 and 15 years who are trading in Oba market. The age range of the children trading was chosen in relation to the definition of a working child by ILO (1991) and the Nigerian Labour Act (1999).¹⁷</p> <p>2. Parents/guardians who have or are related to children that trade in Oba market and must also have a basic understanding of what the research is about.</p> <p>3. Social workers who have been working in the Department of Child Development in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development for at least two years and are conversant with the local and international laws on the rights of the child and other issues associated with those rights. This was assessed by the director of the department.</p>
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¹⁶See Table 6 (3) for the inclusion criteria.

¹⁷See definition of a child by ILO in chapter 3.2.

4.7.4 Data Collection Techniques

Semi-structured interviews are a frequently utilised method in qualitative research where researchers make use of open-ended questions and utilise the probing method of inquiry. This method was utilised to get detailed information about the experiences of children who trade. The method also aids in getting information about the perception of parents and social workers, their feelings and opinions about the trading activity that children do. I was also able to gather information about the extent to which all the participants know about the issue of child trading. The interviews helped me capture deep, detailed and extensive data (Mason, 2002) and to discover new knowledge and different perspectives (Johnson, 1998). I also used follow-up questions during the interviews to make the questions clearer and more understandable to the participants.

During the data collection, I used an interview guide to ensure that similar/related types of questions were utilised across all interviews. The key research questions guided the formation of other sub-questions and all questions were used in both the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. I focused on the views and experiences of the children themselves and the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts in which they live. I recognised the importance of the views and perspectives of parents who were responsible for sending their children to trade and social workers who were in control of the overall welfare of the children, so some of the questions were directed to such issues.

4.7.4.1 Semi-structured Interview and Focus Group Discussions

I used in-depth interview techniques for some of the child participants, aiming to get an independent opinion, not influenced by their peers in the focus group discussions. I also conducted in-depth interviews with some parents and social workers. Each participant in the study was interviewed for a period of forty-five minutes to one and a half hours.

In-depth interviews provided opportunity for participants to voice their opinions on issues that are personal or sensitive to them, opinions which participants would have been reluctant to share in a group setting. For example, CP5's discussion about his mother's childhood experience is a narrative that he would have been reluctant to discuss in a group setting.¹⁸ In-

depth interview allowed social workers to express their views without the fear of their colleagues using those views against them. This also gave the parent participants the opportunity to express issues that may be personal that they would not have expressed in the presence of other participants.

Rasmussena, Akinsulure-Smith, Chuc, and Keatleya (2012) argue that group discussions are generally the preferred mode of debate in many African societies. I conducted focus-group discussions with children and parents. Focus group discussions with children have many advantages for gathering data. They offer support to participants in a group, which allows children a better opportunity for openness in their response. They create an environment that is safe for peers and form a type of classroom work, with small group settings that children are familiar with in their schools. The peer support provided in the small group setting I organised helped in addressing the power imbalance that may have existed between adults and children (Green and Hogan, 2005). In the focus group, some children were more outspoken than others. I observed that some of the children used body language and whispered words of encouragement to their peers who appeared to be very shy and were contributing less to the research. The group discussion was a way of giving voice to those children who were shy and reserved. It also allowed me to get a wider range of views from the children. It enabled me to hear from a range of children and their similar or different experiences as they trade. However, in analysing the data, there was no significant difference between the narratives within the child participants' interviews and narratives within the focus group to justify analysing the data separately; therefore, I analysed the data together. The children's group discussions were of mixed participants.

A focus group discussion was also conducted with the parent participants to learn how much their understanding of their decision-making process about child trading is consistent with the children's description of their experiences and how affected the children are by the trading activity. Another purpose was to identify the degree of awareness that the children and their parents have about the rights of children in the context of child trading. The purpose of this was to provide empirical knowledge on the cultural challenges to the rights of children in the

¹⁸ See chapter 5 section 5.3.5

community. I expected to achieve this by exploring parents' perception of how their decision-making process impacts on the lives of their children. I believe that this aspect of my research will contribute to the implementation of policy that will recognise the socio-cultural contribution to the issue of child labour.

Bringing people with similar situations together to give their views (in this case children and parents) on the issue of child labour in the context of trading revealed a wealth of information and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. I acknowledge that the participants' contributions influenced one another and encouraged them to think and share their experiences and ideas within the group. This created an opportunity to get divergent views and perceptions on the issue and also aided in the understanding of how opinions are negotiated within groups in the community (Patterson, Coffey-Glover, and Peplow, 2016).

Although focus group discussion has many advantages, there are some ethical issues that I needed to consider when conducting the group discussions, especially with children. These included disclosures by participants, which were shared with all group members (not just the researcher alone). All participants were informed of the need to keep the detailed group discussions of the research private and confidential. The children were informed that it is all right for them to say something very general about the topic discussed to a non-participant, but not to give details of what was discussed. Participants were told not to identify what any individual said or discussed in the group.

Another ethical issue I considered during the group discussion with the children was that of the stress or distress in individual participants that the intense group discussion may cause. This can cause strong emotional reactions, especially when doing a focus group with children on sensitive topics. According to Green and Hogan (2005), researchers should monitor the stress levels of participants and be prepared to intervene when necessary. However, this did not arise in my study. There was no issue that could have affected the emotions of the child participants. Issues of gender roles that might have been expected did not arise, perhaps because the children who participated in the study all have siblings of mixed gender.

During the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions with both the children and parents, I had to verbally restructure the research questions for some to understand, due to the varying levels of literacy. Although the research questions were written in standard language (UK English), they had to be translated for the children and parents into Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) to aid their understanding of the topic. Pidgin English is a common and accepted language across Nigeria.

4.7.5 Language

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) was the language used to interview the children and the parent participants in the study. NPE is a language in which the verbal grammar is radically different from that of English and is therefore regarded as a separate language (Akande, 2010) that is spoken across the country and is understood by every individual in the society, whether educated or not, young or old.

This language therefore was used to elicit information from the children and parent participants in the study, to get to the level of the participants' understanding. Responses from the children and parents were transcribed verbatim. The in-depth interviews and the focus group were audio-taped and were also transcribed verbatim. Immediately after each interview, notes were made from the interview transcript. This helped to provide a context for the interview (Hsiung, 2010).

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND VALIDATION

I began the data analysis and interpretation during and beyond the data collection period. Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, and Steinmetz (1995) have argued that qualitative research involves a continuous and progressive analysis of data which guides researchers to focus and refocus. Transcribing, coding, categorisation and the emergence of themes were part of the data analysis; a process which involved examining or studying a phenomenon in order to either understand it better or to discover something from it. It means to break the phenomenon into elements and examine its structure to know what it entails by identifying each part of its constituents and categorising how they are put together (Akinyoade, 2013). The data was analysed using the thematic analysis technique discussed below.

4.8.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis involves methods that analyse and identify themes across data collected through a range of methods including interviews and focus groups (Gray, 2014), and was used in this study. In thematic analysis, patterns are identified, and meanings derived from those patterns in relation to the questions. Although thematic analysis can be conducted easily, because of its theoretical freedom, it is data driven. Its flexibility and usefulness as a research tool provide a rich and detailed but complex narrative (Braun and Clark, 2006). Thematic analysis was employed throughout the data analysis.

4.8.1.1 Transcribing and Categorising

I began transcribing the data while the collection was still ongoing. All the data was transcribed verbatim. I catalogued the transcribed data into themes. This helped to reduce the data to a set of themes that is well ordered (Fuller and Petch, 1995). I re-read the transcripts line-by-line and highlighted the key words and phrases. I also read across all the materials checking for similarities, differences, contradictions and patterns from the data collected among all the participants and identifying categories within the data.

Experience based on socially constructed realities underpinned this data analysis. It is an analysis that is flexible and applies across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. It is often a method that is realistic or experiential and is compatible with an essentialist and constructionist paradigm (Braun and Clark, 2006). I utilised this analysis in my study which made it possible to examine and record patterns that emerged, so that I could describe the phenomena.

4.8.1.2 Coding

Data coding was inductive, so the voices of all participants could be heard. The data analysis process involved the discovery and naming of ideas and the identification and integration of themes into groups with meanings (Glasser, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The themes generated were organised to answer the research questions, although not specific questions that were asked in the interview. At the beginning of the analysis the interview scripts were thoroughly read and re-read, taking note of key words and phrases. This helped me in the

discovery and naming of ideas and concepts in the data which were then labelled (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). During this initial phase of coding, attention was paid both to the concepts that were directly related to the research questions and also to those concepts that, at first sight, appeared unrelated.

The relevance of the instruments for collecting data was based on the following research questions:

- i. How have cultural values influenced parents' decisions in sending their children to trade? Findings from this question were majorly deduced from the perceptions of parents and social work participants.
- ii. What effect has this trading activity had on the children? The perceptions of all stakeholders were sought and written across the three layers of the analysis used for the findings.
- iii. How has the degree of awareness of child rights by both children and parents impacted on child labour/trading? The views of all stakeholders were also incorporated. However, major findings were derived from the social workers' perception.

The different strategies utilised in ensuring trustworthiness is discussed below.

4.9 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Strategies utilised to ensure trustworthiness before, during and after data collection and analysis included reflexivity, verification and confirmability.

4.9.1 Reflexivity

To ensure the trustworthiness of data in a qualitative study, reflexivity is an important requirement (Long and Johnson, 2000). Long and Johnson (2000) explained that in the process of analysis of the data collected, reflexivity aids researchers in considering their beliefs and values and acknowledging that the context and the meanings of the issue being investigated will be felt through their actions. Hsiung (2012) suggests that reflexivity makes the research process a focus of inquiry, laying open the researcher's preconceptions and making him/her aware of situational dynamics in which s/he and the participants are jointly involved regarding knowledge production and the instrument of research. During the data analysis, I was

constantly examining myself and reflecting on my perceptions, so that they did not impact on the analysis. Folay (2002) insists that researchers should use ‘reflexivity as introspection’ (p. 237) and this guided me during the analysis as a continuous self-awareness and critical self-reflection was consciously utilised.

4.9.2 Verification and Confirmability

The audiotape record was compared with field notes to ensure that the information received from the participants was correctly written and documented. The data was verified by reviewing the themes. Verification was also achieved by checking the different data sources to see if they were consistent. Other means included comparing the data with the information gathered from the participants.

The study looked at the perspectives of different participants in the decision-making process of parents with regard to the economic activities that children do through different methods of interviews (in-depth and focus group) and field notes. Incorporating different stakeholders and using different methods of data collection (Seale, 1999) enabled a scholarly and a well-structured interpretation to emerge in this study.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I used a qualitative approach that involved human participants in this study, which of necessity made me interact with the participants. I therefore entered the private spaces/personal domains of values, rights, needs, desires and beliefs of the participants to collect data (Creswell, 2003; Silverman, 2000; Miles and Huberman, 1994). In doing this, the research received full ethical approval in line with Anglia Ruskin University Research Ethics Board’s ethical guidelines to which application was made. Because the data for this study was to be collected in Nigeria, ethical application was also made to and approved by the University of Benin Ethical Board Committee, Edo State, Nigeria. Various ethical issues were considered before, during and after data collection and these included the principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and protection from harm.

4.10.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is an ethical principle that implies a responsibility on the part of the social researcher to ensure that research participants not only agree and consent to participating in the research, without being pressured, but that they are fully informed about what they are consenting to (Davies, 2006). Informed consent statements were provided to the research participants containing statements assuring participants of the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any stage of the research if they wished. Davies (2006) explained that informed consent involves three important elements:

1. Information: informing the participants what the study is about;
2. Voluntariness: ensuring that the participant understands that s/he can decide to withdraw from the study at any time s/he wants to;
3. Comprehension: ensuring that the participants understand what the study is about and their role in the study.

When providing information, I ensured that participants were given sufficient details about the nature of the research and the procedures that would be involved. I made clear to all participants the objectives of the study, the potential risks that might arise if there were any, and the benefits that were expected from the study. The latter will be derived from the final report of the research being disseminated to the Department of Child Development in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development. Findings are expected to contribute to putting intervention programmes in place for the community.

4.10.2 Voluntary Participation

Consent was freely given at every stage of the research and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any stage of the research process without prejudice or consequences. Parents/guardians of the child participants were provided with informed consent forms on behalf of their children. They were also informed that their children's participation in the project is entirely voluntary and it is their (parents/guardians) decision to allow their children to participate and their children's decision to take part in the study if they (parents/guardians) consent to it. The child participants were provided with assent forms before they were allowed to participate. Agreement between the parents/guardians and the children took place prior to

the latter's participation in the study. Children also had the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process. All participants were duly informed, both verbally and in writing, of their participation in the study and they were regularly reminded of being free to withdraw at any stage of the research if they desired to.

4.10.3 Confidentiality

Each participant is entitled to privacy and confidentiality. Confidentiality is the principle that information about participants in a research study will be kept private and will only be revealed with the consent of the participants (Israel and Hay, 2006). Participants were briefed on their roles in respecting confidentiality. I ensured that each person had the right to decide on the time for the interview, the extent to which they could withhold information and the circumstances that might make them withhold anything. All participants were assured that any discussions with them would be kept in confidence. There was complete confidentiality before, during and after the session. For the children participants, I explained before the commencement of the interview that there might be an extent to which the confidentiality and anonymity of the interview with them might have to be broken if the need arose, such as a situation where their or someone else's life was in danger.

The child participants were informed of the expectations of them to tell the story the way it is without fear of information being revealed to anyone else; and if confidentiality had to be broken it would be a case of putting their interest first so that their lives would not be endangered. I had a duty to ensure the safety of the child participants and other children for whom I had responsibility as a researcher, and to guarantee confidentiality if the child or other children were at risk of significant harm or where there emerged information regarding incidents likely to cause harm.

I upheld the principles of confidentiality and followed the procedure in line with data storage and retention. All data were kept securely in locked rooms, within locked filing cabinets and were not shared with any third party without the participants' consent; all electronic data were password protected.

4.10.4 Anonymity

Anonymity was used to protect the privacy of all participants and their identity was not revealed. Alpha-numeric codes, instead of their real names, were used to identify each participant in the study. Participants were assured of anonymity throughout the study. Information about the storage of the data, who will have access to it and how it will be used, was given to the participants in a clear language that could be understood by them.

4.10.5 Protection from Harm

I was mindful of any action that might cause physical or emotional harm to the participants. Such action includes being careful of how sensitive the research questions were and/or how difficult questions were worded during interviews. I took responsibility for protecting every participant from whatever harm that might befall them, for example, emotional stress, embarrassment or whatever situation might put the participants at a disadvantage by reason of the fact that he or she is participating in the project. I decided that if any of the child participants who were of vulnerable age became distressed during the focus group, the session would be immediately stopped. It was decided that children in such condition would be adequately attended to with the assistance of a qualified support worker who was identified as a professional counsellor in the community. The support worker was informed of the research prior to the commencement of the study, and the support worker and I developed a plan for how children who might need help during the discussion would be supported.

4.10.6 Respect for Human Dignity

This is an act of protecting the overall interests of the participants and includes taking into account the physical, psychological, social and emotional effect the research may have on them. Letters detailing the purpose of the research, methods to be used for the study and how information provided would be used, were distributed to the research participants. The letter assured them that all information shared during the study would be kept confidential and they were also reassured of their anonymity in the project. In this regard, participants were informed that their identity would not be revealed and that any information obtained would be held in strict confidence and used only for academic purposes. To ensure that the ethical guidelines

were followed, personal data of participants were removed during the transcription process and quotes from the interview were not identifiable to the participants. I was careful in ensuring that participants were treated with respect and their dignity preserved, by giving every participant the opportunity to express themselves whilst showing appreciation for every piece of information provided by each of them. At the end of the interviews, all participants were given the opportunity for debriefing. All interview tapes, personal data and the research data that was obtained were kept securely with password protection to ensure that no one else, apart from me, had access to them.

4.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have explored the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of the research. I have discussed a case study framework approach that is rooted in a social constructivist philosophy as valid in the research because it allows different stakeholders' perspectives to be discussed. This has helped in the emergence of key concepts in the research. A social constructivist approach allows meanings to be constructed together and makes it possible to get the perspective of all the participants in the study.

The case study approach to the collection of data and the data analysis was qualitative with the methodological decisions aimed at enhancing the production of knowledge in this study. The chapter further discusses the ethical considerations for the study and the validity of the findings.

CHAPTER 5: THEMATIC FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS

5.1 CHAPTER OUTLINE

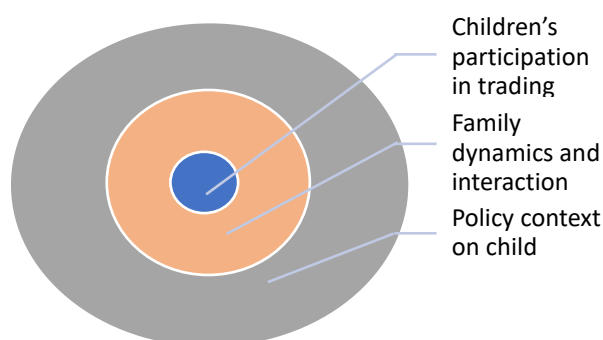
This chapter provides the thematic findings from interviews undertaken with all research participants in the process of data collection. Findings are presented at three layers of analysis: children's participation in trading; family dynamics and interactions; and the policy context of child trading. The first layer of analysis reflects the interviews undertaken with child participants. In the second layer of analysis, contributions from parents, which include in-depth and group interviews, are presented. The third layer of analysis presents major contributions from social workers on issues relating to the policy context of child trading. Parents' narratives were also included in this third layer. A summary of the findings is presented in the final section of the chapter.

5.2 INTRODUCTION: THE THREE LAYERS OF ANALYSIS

Various themes and sub-themes were generated in the process of analysis. However, for ease of organisation and understanding, the findings are presented in three layers of analysis, represented in the diagram shown in Figure 5 below. I decided that it was important to maintain consistency throughout the presentation of the findings from the different stakeholder participants, so that a coherent flow can be achieved, and this will allow for more structured comparisons of the narratives of each stakeholder participant. The three-layer analysis framework was also chosen to capture details of every individual or group of persons in the study, which is an inherent aim of a case study approach. This process will allow the different voices of individuals and group participants to be heard. This is especially relevant for the children as they are given the opportunity to voice their opinions on issues that concern them.

Social workers' perceptions are more reflected in the discussions on policy than parents' and children's. However, several comments from parents and children reflect their own understanding of policies even though they talked about it less directly than did the social workers.

Figure 6: The Three Layers of Analysis



5.3 CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRADING

5.3.1 Participants' Information

A brief summary of background information for the seventeen child participants is presented in Tables 7 and 8 below, where Table 7 refers to children interviewed in depth, and Table 8 refers to participants in the two sets of focus group discussions with children. Information from participants was current at the time of interview. All participants are identified by alphanumeric codes. For in-depth interviews with participants CPn¹ was used as a means of identification, whereas for the focus group participants FGCn² was used. As can be seen from the table, participants trade in different types of wares. While most trade in pure water (eight participants), others trade in plantain chips (three participants), vegetables (three participants) and fresh pepper and tomatoes (two participants). Only one participant traded in santana (half-cooked cassava root). The mean age of participants was thirteen years. Ten were females and seven males. All participants were recruited from Oba market.

Table 7: Child Participant (In-depth interview) background information

Child Participant (CP) Numeric Symbol	Age	Gender	Grade in school	Number of siblings	Birth Position	Type of wares sold
CP1	12	F	JSS 1	2 (1b ¹⁹ +1s ²⁰)	2nd	Santana (Half-cooked cassava)
CP2	13	M	JSS 1	5 (3b+2s)	4th	Pure water
CP3	14	F	JSS 2	4 (3b+1s)	4th	Vegetables
CP4	13	F	JSS 1	4 (2b+2s)	1st	Pure water
CP5	12	M	Pry 6	3 (1b+2s)	3rd	Plantain Chips

Table 8: Focus Group with Children's Background Information

Focus Group with Children Numeric symbol (FGC)	Age	Gender	Grade in school	Number of siblings	Birth Position	Type of wares sold
FGC1,1	10	F	Pry 5	5 (2b+3s)	3rd	Pure water
FGC1,2	13	F	JSS 2	6 (2b+4s)	4th	Pure water
FGC1,3	13	M	JSS 1	4 (3b+1s)	2nd	Vegetables
FGC1,4	14	F	JSS 3	3 (1b+2s)	2nd	Plantain chips
FGC1,5	12	F	Pry 6	4 (2b+2s)	3rd	Fresh pepper and tomatoes
FGC1,6	12	M	Pry 6	3 (1b+2s)	1st	Plantain Chips
FGC2,1	12	M	JSS 1	3 (1b+2s)	2nd	Pure water
FGC2,2	13	F	JSS 1	3 (1b+2s)	3rd	Pure water
FGC2,3	13	M	JSS 1	5 (1b+4s)	2nd	Vegetables
FGC2,4	14	F	JSS 2	2 (2b)	1st	Pure water
FGC2,5	10	M	Pry 4	4 (1b+3s)	4th	Fresh pepper and tomatoes
FGC2,6	15	F	JSS 3	4 (2b+2s)	2nd	Pure water

5.3.2 A Form of Responsibility

Most children discuss their perception of trading as being a reflection of their responsibility to contribute economically to the household. The participants suggest they are obliged to work as their parents need them to contribute to the family economy, which they believe their parents are unable to do alone.

'It is not that she cannot do it herself, it's just that she cannot do it alone, she needs me and my sister and brother as her children to be able to give her all the support that she needs' (CP5).

'These our mothers they struggle a lot for us, that is why most times we have to help them when we can, especially as it is not only one or two of us children she has to care for, as we are many. It is not easy. We have to help them no matter what' (FGC2,6).

¹⁹ & ²⁰ Represent brother and sister respectively.

Being obliged to trade even when they do not want to because they are tired, was seen as a form of responsibility for the children as they see their parents, especially their mothers, struggling to care and meet their daily needs. Participants comment:

‘Sometimes we are so tired that we don’t want to trade at that very time, but when we look at how our mother is struggling to do what she can for us, we must help out’ (CP2).

‘My mother is trying; she is the only one struggling for all of us. It is not easy, that is why I always tell my brothers that we have to help her no matter what happens’ (CP3).

Thus, children view their financial contribution to the household through trading as a form of responsibility on their part.

However, responsibility is also understood by the children in the context of the decisions made by other members of the family to send them to trade. The issue of who is responsible within the family depends on who the children live with. Although there is a general notion that parents are responsible for taking decisions about the trading activity that their children do, the children perceive that sometimes parents alone cannot be held responsible for this activity. Extended family members, for example grandmothers, were also identified by a few participants as responsible for their trading activity.

‘My grandmother sends me to trade; I live with her. I need to help her because she is old and does not have enough money to take care of herself and me. She adds the money we gain from trading to what she already has to take care of both of us’ (FGC1,1).

‘Some of us children, it is not only our parents that send us to trade. Sometimes our uncles and aunties also send us, as some of us also live with them. There is nothing we can do about it, that is a family thing’ (FGC2,3).

Being responsible is an important value in the lives of the children who are involved in trading. When the children trade it is seen as part of growing from a responsible child into a responsible adult. This is a quality that the children perceived to be appreciated and valued by their parents.

5.3.3 Being Obedient

Child participants strongly view obedience as part of being a responsible child in the household. The children referred to their duty to trade as part of a positive contribution to the progress of the family. The children also referred to their duty to be obedient to their parents and every other adult in the household by trading, as they would see it as a negative attitude if they refused to trade when sent.

'Well I think it will be very wrong for me to be the disobedient one in the family' (CP5).

'Being disobedient will neither earn my sister and brothers nor myself any good. After all, even if we say we will not do it, we will still end up doing it whether we like it or not, so why bother, when you may even end up being punished' (CP2).

Other children view being disobedient as a form of irresponsibility, as parents expect their children to obey them when sent to trade.

'All of us, as we are here, we are all expected to obey and respect our parents and other adults. It is only children that are not responsible that will not obey their parents or respect what they say' (FGC1,4).

Similar statements from other participants include:

'In my family, we are taught that we should be obedient to our senior ones like our parents, our uncles and our aunts and even including our grandparents, because they are adult, and they are wiser than us. Therefore, we should be able to accept and obey whatever instruction they pass to us without complaint. That makes us responsible' (FGC2,3).

'Even though sometimes you are very tired and don't want to do it, you will still have to. Who wants to know whether you are happy to do it or not, your duty is to do it without question, so you have to accept that duty' (FGC2,1).

One way in which obedience is ensured by parents is through punishment. All the child participants agreed that they had to trade without arguing whenever they were told to do so by either their parents or other relatives in the family. The children confirmed that their refusal to trade, even when it was because they were tired, was viewed as a form of disobedience on their part and this was unacceptable within the family system. CP2 below describes how he

was told by his mother that he would not be given food because he refused to trade, and to his surprise his mother kept to her word.

'So, you mean you were punished by your mother, for refusing to trade because you were tired?' (Researcher).

'Yes, she said that she will not give me food one day for not going to hawk and she kept to her promise and I did not eat any food throughout that day. I had to be drinking water and I became sick after that. I didn't expect that she could do that' (CP2).

Other child participants referred to other forms of punishment that are meted out to them when they refuse to trade. Most common among these is beating, where whips are used on the children, like FGC2,2 who reported that even when she tried to enlighten her mother once that trading is against the law, she was punished. CP4 and FGC1,3 were also among other children that referred to being beaten when they refused trading.

'Have you ever refused trading by explaining to your parents that you have been taught in school to not trade because it is wrong?' (Researcher).

'If I tell her she will still force me to go ahead and trade anyway. I tried it once, the very day they taught us about our rights in our social studies class and I told my mother that as a child, I am not supposed to be trading, so I refused to go that day. My mother beat me so much, at the end I still had to go' (FGC2,2).

'When my mother tells me to go and sell so that we can have money to eat, I have to go. I cannot tell her that I will not sell because she will beat me' (CP4).

'I don't use to tell her that I am not selling, ooh, I don't use to say so every time. If she said I should help her to sell, I will just go and do it and when I finish, I will go home and rest' (FGC1,3).

'Why don't you tell her that you cannot go?' (Researcher).

'Because I know that she will say I did not obey her and will beat hell out of me' (FGC1,3).

A few of the children said the idea of asking their parents why they send them to trade was impossible. They view asking such questions as a form of disrespect and rude behaviour towards adults, especially one's parents.

'Because I cannot say it. It is not allowed and expected that you should talk back to or question your senior ones, especially your parents about anything they send you to do, including trading. Any child that does that is regarded as a stubborn and disrespectful child. We know that our parents cannot be wrong' (FGC2,3).

'I have never think it, eeehm ... that I should start asking my parents why they do this or why they do that, because I think it is not right to do that' (FGC2,6).

Some of the children suggest that they either lack the courage to ask their parents or it is not necessary for them to ask their parents as they themselves are already aware of the reason why their parents send them to trade.

'So, you have never asked your parents the reason they send you to trade?' (Researcher).

'I have never ever thought of asking her, and even if I decide today that I am going to ask her, I don't think I will have the courage to do so, because it will affect all of us in the house' (CP5).

'I cannot ask my mother that kind of question because I already know why. She does not have enough money to care for all of us and if only her is doing it, it will be impossible for us to be able to get money to feed, not to talk of buying other things that we need as children' (FGP2,2).

Although some of the children said that they do not have enough courage to confront their parents about the trading activity, a few others had confronted them. They felt that being aware that trading is against the law, because of what they have been taught in school about their rights, gave them the courage to refuse trading. However, they said that they were always forced to continue the activity anyway. The decision to continue to trade and support their parents even when some of the children know they are not supposed to, seems to arise from the belief that they will be punished by their parents. As punishment is an acceptable norm for a child's disobedience, the children accept this norm and continue to trade.

5.3.4 Having the Choice

Choice and rights were challenging issues in the context of the everyday activities that children do in the home. Some of the children stated that they were not given the choice about trading.

Others said that they are not involved in decision-making, while a number of participants referred to being denied the opportunity to express themselves.

'It is not a matter of whether I like trading or not, it is something you have to do as a child since your parents asked you to help them. All of us here are all brought up to obey our parents, you have no choice about that' (FGC2,2).

'You cannot decide whether you want to trade or not. That decision is always with our parents and not us. Our own duty is just to obey' (FGC1,4).

'Whether we want to or not, we have to accept that we don't have any choice when our parents are deciding anything concerning us. Whether it is for our own good or not, we have nothing to say or do except what they ask us to do or say' (CP3).

The child participants also referred to their responsibility to contribute financially to the family as it is expected that they assist their parents. Some of the participants were concerned about the extent to which their mothers strived to provide their daily needs. This was expressed by some of the participants interviewed:

'Because she is not supposed to ask me, she will only just tell me to go and sell for her and I will have to go' (CP2).

'My mother is trying; she is the only one struggling for all of us. It is not easy, that is why I always tell my brother that we have to help her no matter what happens. Because she cannot get enough money to take care of us if we don't help her, so we have to help her by selling' (CP3).

Some of the participants referred to not being given the opportunity to take decisions for themselves about what they need or want. Some of the children suggest that even when they are unhappy to trade and may find one excuse or another not to trade, they are still forced by their parents to do so.

'I don't like selling, there was even a time I was so unhappy about going to sell that I had to tell my mother that my body was paining me, and I cannot go and sell, but she didn't listen to me, she still forced me to go and sell, and I had to do it' (CP2).

'Because if I tell her, I eeheeee ... I don't know how to say it, but ... I think she will be angry inside her mind, so I don't even bother' (FGC2,3).

'How do you expect me to tell her that I cannot sell today, she will just kill me, especially when she has already explained to us that our daddy said he has no money to give us to buy our complete books? So I have to do it whether I like it or not' (CP4).

Most of the children acknowledge that they were unhappy about being sent to trade, but they could not refuse when sent because their primary obligation was to assist their mothers. The children also referred to trading as beneficial, as it makes them strong and hardworking. They are aware that their own welfare at one level is tied up with whether they trade or not, as they build resilience and a work ethic and also provide what is needed for physical survival.

'Well, I think it is my duty to help my mother, even though sometimes I am not happy when I am doing it, I cannot just be looking at her suffering alone because of me and my brother and sister. I think that my helping her to sell is also for my own good' (CP1).

'How?' (Researcher).

'I think it has kind of made me strong and hardworking' (CP1).

'I don't like trading, but there is nothing I can do about it. I have to do it because if I don't our mother will not have enough to take care of us' (FGC1,2).

Many of the children said that it is not acceptable when they refuse to trade, as some mothers even resort to requesting the children's father to talk to the children so that they can assist their mother. Others referred to not being given the choice whether or not to trade.

'I told my mother that I don't like selling and I don't want to sell again, but she kept on saying that I should help her to sell, she told my daddy, and my daddy then said that I should help her to sell, and any time I am tired I can rest. After selling I will go home and rest' (FGC1,6).

'If they ask me to choose, I will not sell. It is because I have no choice, that is why I have to sell to help my mother' (FGC2,4).

In addition, all except one participant in the group discussion mentioned being happy when she helps her grandmother to trade.

'I am always happy when selling for my grandmother, because I know that is the only way I can support her' (FGC1,1).

Comments from some of the children in the second group and the in-depth interview suggest that it has not crossed any of the participants' minds about their feelings of being happy or not when they assist their parents to trade.

5.3.5 Feeling Compassionate

Most of the child participants felt concerned about their parents' need for their positive contribution to the finance of the household. They referred to how they need to assist their parents due to their parents' health condition (see CP1 and FGC1,5).

'I think that I have to help her because she needs my help, especially with the condition she is in right now. She is not well, so I have to do it. I think I will feel very sorry for her if I don't do it' (CP1).

'If my mother sends me to go and sell for her, I cannot tell her that I will not go especially now that she is not too well, I need to help her so that we can be able to feed, and she will be able to send us to school' (FGC1,5).

A few participants referred to childbirth as the reason why their mothers were unable to 'currently' trade (see CP4).

'My mother cannot sell by herself right now because she just had another baby. I have a baby sister that my mother cannot leave alone. So I and my younger brother sell more this time that she cannot help it. We have to help her to make sure that she does not start thinking of how to take care of all our problems so that it does not affect her' (CP4).

Others referred to lower profits if their parents are not supported to trade as it also affects the length of time it takes their parents to trade. CP1 referred to when she and her sibling assist their mother in trading, their mother could finish selling all her wares on time, giving her the opportunity to buy more wares and therefore to make more profit.

'Yes, she can do it by herself, but it will be hard for her, because the profit she will make for that day will be small. But I remember that whenever we help her to sell she always finishes selling on time and can easily buy more santana for us to sell again, and before you know it we have sold plenty for that day which will bring more profits' (CP1).

Most of the children referred to how feeling the need to help their parents has contributed to their being able to take independent decisions on what to buy for the household after the day's trading. CP5 explained that being reminded to buy foodstuffs for the family has helped him in taking decisions on his own.

'I think by helping my mother to sell ... you know... that feeling that I need to help her, I am able to know what to do most times even when my mother forgets to tell me what to do. Like buying what we are going to cook whenever I finish selling, I don't have to wait for her to tell me every day; and when I do that without being told, my mother is so happy that she will embrace me' (CP5).

A similar situation of independent decision-making mentioned by some of the children was when they referred to how they had been able to resist negative peer pressure. CP3 stressed this in the following quote:

'Even when I am in the midst of some of my friends in the market, and they will want you to do some things that they do, it's like what you know yourself that it's wrong and your parents will not like it. Even if my parents will never know, no matter how my friends try to persuade me, I don't listen to them. I am able to take decisions without influence from anyone' (CP3).

Others referred to their satisfaction when they see their parents' happiness whenever they get home and declare the huge sales for that day (CP4 and FGC2,1). CP5 discussed his mother's story about her own childhood and how it affected him.

'Whenever I am able to sell very well, sometimes everything, you will see the relief in my mother's face, I feel satisfied that I have contributed to her happiness' (CP4).

'Helping to remove that tiredness she sometimes feels when I come back from selling and tell her that I have sold a lot today, and then seeing the smile in her face satisfy me too' (FGC2,1).

'My mother talks often about how she suffered when she was young, how difficult it was for her parents to be able to take care of them because she had a lot of siblings, her father was always sick, and her mother had to often be with him to take care of him before he finally passed away. They had to share most of her siblings among relations, even before her father died. Hearing such a story makes me feel so sorry for her and become more determined to help her' (CP5).

Overall, while the majority of the children agreed that their participation in trading has contributed positively to their behaviour, especially in decision-making, others felt resentful as they continue to trade because of the punishment they receive when they refuse.

5.3.6 School Attendance Versus Trading Activity

Most of the child participants stressed that trading in the morning before going to school affected their school attendance. They referred to being either late to school or sometimes completely absent.

‘Because I must sell first before going to school, most times I am late. Sometimes I have to be absent from school, like today when the term is just starting’ (FGC1,3).

‘Today is the second day of school, they don’t do much. Real teaching will start on Monday next week. We play most of the time this first week’ (FGC2,5).

‘I will go tomorrow, and I will ask my friends what the teacher taught today’ (CP1).

Others referred to not having the opportunity to relax or play as their parents expect them to trade immediately after school as well.

‘Once I finish from school and I get home, I immediately have to go to the market, because things that I am going to sell are already prepared and waiting for me. It’s just for me to just change, eat and go’ (CP4).

Among the focus groups, the children referred to being able to rest²¹ only when they put down their wares to sell to their customers or buyers.

‘We only rest when we are trading. Like when someone is buying something from you, you can use that period to rest’ (FGC2,1).

‘We can also rest when we buy something to eat when we are hungry’ (FGC2,4).

Some of the children referred to doing the right thing as they assist their parents to trade. They stressed that assisting their parents to trade helps to provide food for them and the reading and

²¹ Wares for sale are carried on the children’s heads as they walk about within the market environs. They are able to have a ‘break’ by putting their wares on the ground when they want to eat or when they want to sell to a customer.

writing materials they need in school.

'We are kind of doing the right thing because if you don't have enough money, you cannot go and steal to survive, so you have to help your mother. If you are not doing the right thing you cannot earn money to feed nor to buy books for school' (FGC1,4).

'At least with this help we always give to our mother, we are able to buy some of the things that we need in school and also buy some of the wares we need for school without stressing her' (FGC2,3).

Other children feel indifferent and helpless about not attending school regularly. They referred to being able to, at least, attend and copy from their peers what they were taught on the day(s) they were absent.

'As long as I am not in school today, I don't think of what is happening. I have missed school today already, there is nothing I can do about it. If I am able to go tomorrow, then I will just copy notes and get on with other things for that day' (CP3).

'But copying notes will not explain to you all that the teacher has taught in your absence' (Researcher).

'I know, but there is nothing I can do about that. What has passed, has passed' (CP3). 'Whether I feel happy or not when I don't go to school because of trading, it doesn't really matter, all that is important is that I am able to go at least' (CP5).

Some children said that the trading they do has helped them in paying for other educational needs apart from tuition fees, for which the government is responsible. These additional educational expenses were viewed as being even more expensive than the tuition fees.

'It is only school fees that we don't pay for, we pay for every other thing that we need in school like test and exam fees. We also buy all our books, pencils, colour paints, biros and all other things that may be needed when we are in school. So we have to do it, whether we are forced or not' (CP2).

'Even when you come to calculate it, sometimes you will see that all these other things we pay for in school are more than the school fees we are not paying, that is why we have to do it' (FGC1,4).

The comments above illustrate the importance that the children place on trading, knowing that if they do not trade, they may be unable to attend school. This suggests that for these children, education has been constructed as a privilege rather than a right. This also shows that the issue

is not necessarily about trading versus school attendance, but a case of trading apparently being necessary for school attendance. Their lack of awareness of their rights to education is evident in the children's concern about earning income in order to meet their school needs.

5.3.7 Children's Awareness of their Rights

Although the majority of the children in the study acknowledged that they are not aware of their rights as are enshrined in child rights law, a few others such as CP2 and CP5 referred to their being aware of these rights as they were taught about it in school. They explained that whenever they are informed of their rights in their school, they also report to their parents about these rights.

'I am aware because my teacher reminds us of it every time, especially when we are expecting inspectors from the ministry' (CP2).

'Whenever we are in the assembly at school, they talk about it' (CP5).

Social workers in the study argued that all school children are aware of their rights as there are frequent awareness campaigns in the different schools in the state.²²

During this discussion on the rights of the children, while a few acknowledged their parents' awareness of their rights, the majority stated that their parents are not aware of these rights or of the laws guarding against the violation of children's rights.

'They used to advertise it on the television every time and I watched it with my grandmother, and I will be explaining to her what they are talking about'

(FGC1,1). 'When they gave us the book in school, I gave it to my mother and also told her what they said in school' (CP5).

'Most of us our parents don't know anything about our rights as children. They expect us to just do as we are told, as for them, we don't have any right, they are the one to decide for us' (FGC2,6).

Although, some of the children in the study claimed to have informed their parents about their rights as they are informed in school, parents seem not to place importance on the information

²²See social workers view in chapter 5 section 5.6.

received from their children.

The next section presents findings on the second layer of the data analysis, which reflects on family dynamics and interaction.

5.4 FAMILY DYNAMICS AND INTERACTION

This section presents the findings from interviews undertaken with parents. It presents the narrative of the decision-making process of parents and the ways that members of the family interact with one another in achieving goals that are beneficial to the family. Findings are presented by incorporating the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions of the parents.

5.4.1 Parents' Background Information

A summary of the demographic information of the nine parent participants involved in both the in-depth interview and the focus group discussion is presented in Tables 9 & 10 below. All participants are represented with alpha-numeric symbols: PPn¹ for in-depth interviews with participants and FGPN² for focus group participants. All participants, except one, were female. Five were between the ages of 42 and 47 years, two were between 30 and 35 years and the other two were 27 and 28 years of age.

Table 9: Parent Participant (In-depth interview) Background Information

Parent Participant (PP), Numeric Symbol	Age	Gender	Number of children	Type of wares sold	Level of education
PP1	30 years	Male	2 (a boy and a girl)	Rice and beans	Completed secondary school
PP2	28 years	Female	2 (2 boys)	Vegetables	Completed secondary school
PP3	46 years	Female	4 (2 boys, 2 girls)	Garri and tubers of yam	Stopped in class 3
PP4	45 years	Female	3 (boys)	Foodstuffs	Stopped in class 2

Table 10: Focus Group with Parents' Background Information

Focus Group with Parents Numeric symbol (FGP)	Age	Gender	Number of children	Type of wares sold	Level of education
FGP1	42 years	Female	6 (a boy and 5 girls)	Various types of fish	Stopped in class 2
FGP2	47 years	Female	5 (3 boys 2 girls)	Assorted meat	Pry 6
FGP3	46 years	Female	3 (a boy and 2 girls)	Foodstuffs	Stopped in class 4
FGP4	35 years	Female	2 (a boy and a girl)	Foodstuffs	Completed secondary school
FGP5	27 years	Female	2 (a boy and a girl)	Vegetables	Completed secondary school

One of the sub-themes generated under the family dynamics and interactions level of analysis is the role of stratification. Functions within the family are negotiated through stratified roles among members of the household.

5.4.2 Role Stratification

Participants referred to husbands'/fathers' inability to fulfil their role as the head of the family and breadwinner for the upkeep of the family. To meet the major obligations of household maintenance, participants referred to the fact that mothers resort to sending their children to trade.

'If all of us were doing our duty, like our husband will provide money for us to take care of the children, while we women also help them with whatever we have, and concentrate on our own duty by taking care of the children and maintaining the home, I don't think many of us women will be sending our children to trade for us. It is because many of us don't get that financial help that we need from our husband, that is why we send our children to help us' (PP2).

'Men do not work anymore; it is the women that are mostly responsible for the financial burdens in the home these days' (FGP2).

'And because our husbands know that even if they don't give us money to take care of the house and the children, we on our part will try to see what we can do. They end up not bothered about providing money for us to do our duty well' (FGP4).

However, participants referred to some of the husbands/fathers being able to take responsibility for their financial obligations to the family, especially meeting their children's financial needs. The few women who have such husbands were referred to as 'lucky' while those who do not, express envy.

'Though there are some very, very few lucky women, whose husbands are responsible for all their children's financial demands. I have a sister who does not even buy the least things like pencils for her children. It is the husband that is responsible for everything. I used to tell her every time that she is very lucky' (FGP2).

'When we women are discussing sometimes, and you hear some women telling you how their husband provides all the money for everything in the house, you will see some of us finding it very strange that there are men out there who still take care of their family without waiting for their wives to help. I am kind of jealous of all those women sometimes. As my sister has just said, they are really very lucky. Many of us don't have that kind of luck' (FGP3).

Most of the participants referred to how husbands/fathers demonstrate their role as head of the household through verbal or non-verbal control and decision-making in the family. For example, a father/husband may dictate and disclose his feelings about the number and gender of children he wants. However, some participants said that some women will not always conform to this.

'Where we, the women have fault is that the man will inform the woman of the number of children he wants, but the woman will end up giving birth to so many children when the man has already specified the number of children he wants. Like myself, my husband has already told me the number of children he wants. Therefore I will not just be giving birth to children because I want to, when the number of children wanted is already specified by my husband' (FGP5).

Other participants challenged some women's acceptance of their husbands' preference for a particular number of children, stating that there were times when the woman had to go against the wishes of her husband. The participants stressed that it is better for the woman to think of the best interest of the family rather than what the husband wants. FGP2 discussed her personal experience with her husband who prefers to have many children:

'Like my husband, he likes a lot of children, he is ready to accept even up to twelve children, but for me I cannot do it. Like my sister said a while ago, I will not give birth to twelve children because my husband said he wants twelve children. Although he

does not know that I don't agree with him, I won't tell him, so that it does not cause any quarrel. How many children do I even have now ... to even train this number of children as they are at present is very difficult. How would I have been able to cope if I had given birth to twelve children as he wanted? I would have packed to my village with the children by now' (FGP2).

Being able to make decision on number of children in the family, in order to have a more controlled economic status that does not affect the overall welfare of the children is part of the parents' perception of some of the ways to avoid child labour. Limiting the number of births no matter what the number of children a spouse may want is perceived as one of the ways parents can preserve the economic conditions within the home.

However, some parents argued that sometimes the decision to have many children is not necessarily to satisfy their husband, rather it is because the woman is faced with the dilemma of having female children only with no male child. In the process of trying to have a male child because of the perception that having a male child provides marital security in the home, the woman may have more children than initially planned or intended, as some of the participants are quoted as saying:.

'For me, I think that some women give birth to more children not because they wanted to do that before, but because all their children are girls and no boys, and because they want to have a boy, they will continue to try and end up with more children than they initially wanted' (FGP1).

'That is true. Like two of my sisters-in-law, one has eight children and the other has nine. The first one has six girls and the last two children are boys, while the second one has eight girls and the last born is a boy. I'm sure both were desperate to have male children that was why they had so many children' (FGP4).

'How are they (sisters-in-law) able to cope with these number of children? Do you know if their husbands provide for the home?' (Researcher).

'I don't think so, because it is not as if they are looking better. But if their husbands are providing, I don't think they provide much; as my sister-in-law with eight children have a small store in their house where she sells provision and the children also help her to sell. While the one with nine children buy cassava from farmers, she and her children process the cassava and sell in the market every market day.' (FGP4).

The above narratives reflect parent participants view that women involve their children in trading activity because of husbands'/fathers' inability to adequately function in their financial role of providing for the home. Consequently, having more children than originally planned

due to the quest to have a male child may result in the children being sent to trade in order to meet the financial needs of the household.

5.4.3 Gender and Power Imbalance between Parents

Participants acknowledge that women are under the authority of their husband as expected within the family. They stressed that even though husbands may not appear domineering, women tend to believe that their husbands have authority over the decisions that they take concerning their children. Some of the participants reported being unable to send their children to trade without their husbands' approval, and also that children did not obey them without that approval:

'Even those of us that our children help us to sell, they help us because our husbands approve of it. If not, if you send them and our husband says no they should not go, they won't and most times we cannot do otherwise. Because when these children are getting out of hand when they are growing up, it is our men that will help us to control them because children always fear their father more than their mother' (FGP4).

Some participants stated that some fathers are able to control the children because the children understand that their father will not be patient or understanding with them as compared to their mother when they do not do what they are told.

'They feel that their mother will be patient with them and will also understand them easily, but their fathers will never understand, neither will they be patient with them, so they quickly do what you tell them once you mention their father, knowing that their father supports us for our children to help us' (FGP2).

Others acknowledged that sometimes when they defy their husbands regarding sending the children to trade, it can affect their relationship (see FGP5) while a few participants stated that some fathers do not allow their children to trade because they are able to provide for the children (see PP3).

'I think it can affect our relationship with our husbands assuming our husbands don't approve it and we are stubborn enough to still send them. You can be brought before the family to start explaining to them why you did not obey your husband's wish' (FGP5).

'When my husband was alive, my children were not trading. He was very hard working and used to provide all that the children needed. They never followed me to the market

because he never approved it. They were always at home when they came from school' (PP3).

Participants talked about their children's obedient response to their fathers' instructions rather than their mothers' by giving the example of times when they informed the children that they would tell their father know about their refusal to help. The group participants recounted that even when children tried finding reasons to avoid trading, when they were informed by their mothers that their father would be told of their refusal to help to trade, that they tended to obey their mothers immediately and go on to trade for them.

'They will not come and meet me in the market to help me trade, they will be using the excuse that they are tired. I will just tell them that I am going to tell their father that they said that they will not come over to the market to help me, immediately they will start coming' (FGP1).

'Children are so much afraid of their fathers, they have more respect for them than us, their mothers. Even though their father doesn't say anything, looking at their father's face alone will make them do what we their mothers tell them even if they did not want to do it before' (FGP3).

'Sometimes these our children will try to prove stubborn ... when they go the first round and they finish selling on time, if you send them again they will tell you they are tired, but if you tell them that you will go and tell their father, you will see them going to sell' (FGP2).

The data shows that fathers play a significant role in the context of child trading in the family because men can use their power and authority to firmly make their children obey their instructions or the instructions given by their mothers. The women have limited authority and power over children as children are more likely to disobey them than their fathers.

It is also very striking that participants perceived the dowry paid by a man to the woman's family for her hand in marriage as being one of the ways a woman becomes powerless and voiceless in the household. Most participants agreed that the receipt of a dowry by the woman's family gives more rights to the man than to the woman as she is viewed by him as indebted because of it. They stressed that while major decisions in the household are made by the man, when some of these decisions are made by the woman, they need to be approved of

by the man, because the man is assumed to have the rights and authority within the household over the woman.

'The bride price they paid gives them (the men) complete control over us' (FGP3).

'Yes, because they paid the bride price that is why we have to respect them whether we like it or not' (FGP4).

'They will even say that when they married you, you had nothing, no matter what you have, tradition demands that you respect them, and they have authority over you' (FGP5).

'When you are arguing with them sometimes, they will tell you that you have nothing to say, they own you, so you just have to obey them, after all they paid the dowry' (FGP1).

Most of the participants referred to traditional expectations where women respect and obey their husbands, as children are also expected to respect their parents and other adults in the family. Participants acknowledged that even though it is expected for men to be the sole financier of the household, the women are always held responsible for any failure or instability in the family that may be due to financial challenges.

'When children grow up to be responsible children, everybody, including even your family will say, it is because their father is a responsible man, the man knows how to control his home, but when the children are wayward, their mother will be blamed by their father, his family and even everybody' (FGP1).

'Because all of us cannot completely depend on our husband or our children, that is why we come to the market to trade too, even though our children also help us, because it lies in our hands? for our home to stand and if it does not stand, it is we women that will be blamed for it and not our men' (FGP2).

'If the children are irresponsible, it is the woman that everybody will blame' (FGP3).

Participants referred to mothers that stayed at home as full-time housewives but send their children alone to trade in the market, and they were considered to be parents that want an easy life when they otherwise have the opportunity to do something beneficial for the family (see FGP1 and FGP4 below).

'I don't know why a woman like me will want to sit down at home doing nothing and waiting for my husband to provide for the family. If your husband doesn't bring money

and when your children don't sell, you cannot take care of the children, that is a very bad example some mothers are showing to their children' (FGP2).

A few of the participants said that some women send their children to trade because they want to be full-time housewives and expect their children to trade for them, even when some of these women are financially supported by their husbands.

'Yes of course, the woman wants to be a full-time housewife. That is why they will rather send their children than do it themselves' (FGP1).

'They want to be a full-time housewife so that their children will go and be working and making profit for them to add to whatever their husband is giving them for food' (FGP4).

Other participants affirmed that mothers were often blamed when their children traded, as they are also blamed when their children do not grow up from being a responsible child to becoming a responsible adult.

5.4.4 Parents' Expectations of their Children

Most participants of the parents' focus group reported how they had assisted their parents to trade when they were young and expected their children to play that same role of assistance to them as their parents.

'Most of us did it when we were young. We helped our parents, so I don't see any reason why our children will not do the same thing for us' (FGP4).

'I did it when I was young for my parents, why will my child not do it if she needs to, that is how we are brought up to help our parents' (FGP1).

'When I was a child ... I must go and hawk in the morning ... and I also hawk when I come back from school in the afternoon. That is how it is also with my children, they come and assist me sometimes to hawk in the market' (FGP2).

Similar views were also expressed by some of the individual parent participants:

'That is how we were brought up to help our parents, and through that help we also learn before we become adults. We are also expected to teach our children the same thing' (PP3).

'My children are supposed to help me, that is how we bring them up. The same way I helped my mother when I was growing up' (PP2).

Some parents, however, referred to children's participation in trading to assist their parents as having a negative impact on the children's lives.

'We know as parents that we all helped our parents when we were young, but some of us will just completely rely on our children so that it will now affect the child badly. This is not right at all' (FGP5).

'It is not that it is wrong for our children to assist us to sell, but sometimes this selling will lead the children to start doing bad things that they copy from their friends that are also selling' (FGP3).

'As for me when I was young, I and my siblings helped my mother in the sawmill, but these days I think it is better to allow the children to concentrate on their study more so that they don't drop out of school' (PP1).

Thus, regarding parent's expectations of their children, in the focus groups and in individual interviews, even though some parents' viewed children assisting parents by trading as having a negative impact on the child's life, all participants viewed such assistance as being obligatory. The assistance is also perceived as a part of the developmental stage that children need for a fulfilled childhood, accomplished within the family to prepare them for adulthood. This childhood accomplishment was more valued within the extended family.

5.4.5 Large Family and Extended Family Influence

An accepted practice within the community is polygamy. Although none of the participants acknowledged being in any polygamous relationship, the majority of the participants referred to polygamy as a practice that used to be accepted within the community so that there could be plenty of children in the household to help with the family business, for example, farming. Participants referred to children's participation in the family business according to the gender of the child, as boys often go with their fathers to the farm while girls help their mothers in the market.

'Because of farming people used to have plenty of children to help them in their farm and our fathers used to have plenty wives so that they can have plenty children. But today even though some of us will not like more children, even if our husband likes

them, but we expect that the small number we have should help us with our businesses' (FGP2).

'In the olden days yes, I think it contributed because then, women used to have plenty of children to help them and their husbands to farm. While the boys will follow their fathers to farm, the girls will follow their mothers to the market, so that they can help them to sell the produce from the farm' (FGP5).

'Children help their parents today as before, that is part of us because the family is always big. Sometimes your brothers and sisters can be staying with you and your family, you do everything together' (PP1).

Findings revealed that parents are not the only persons involved in the decision to send their children to trade. Extended family members including grandmothers were also found to be responsible for children's involvement in trading. The majority of the participants referred to parents' decision for some of their children to live with their grandmothers as being influenced by household practices existing across generations, where there is mutual support for the wellbeing of the children in the family. Some of the children may prefer to live with their parents and siblings rather than their grandmothers. Some participants acknowledged that threatening to send the children to their grandmothers if they refused to trade has been used to coerce the children in trading. A participant acknowledged that fact when talking about assistance from her daughter:

'My daughter knows that if she does not do it, I will be left with no option than for her to go and stay with my mother. She knows that since their father died, I am left to take care of them alone and it is difficult to cope. So by the time I told her that she will have to help me to sell or she will go and stay with my mother if she refuses to sell, she had always agreed to sell until she got pregnant' (PP3).

The system of collective responsibility within the Nigerian community, where everyone in the family is responsible for the general upbringing of every child, influences parents' decisions to give out their children to grandmothers or other extended family members for care. In return children assist these adults whose care they are in.

5.4.6 Parental Roles in Trading

Most participants described the value of child trading in relation to their own childhood experience, other parents' attitudes and the impact the activity has on children. Participants

considered as important the transfer of positive attitudes that contribute to their development from responsible children into responsible adults, when parents send their children to trade. Participants believed their childhood experiences in trading contributed to their becoming responsible adults (see FGP2).

‘... because they know as well as I do that it is for the betterment of the family and it will also make them strong and responsible ... just as I am, because I did this same thing when I was their age and look at me now’ (FGP2).

Other participants believed that beyond laziness, greed and shame also contribute to some mothers sending their children to trade on their behalf. Participants referred to some mothers that are shy about being seen by their friends or acquaintances trading in the least valuable wares like pure water, and that this influences them to send their children in their stead.

‘Some of these parents feel shy, they will say “how can a whole me be selling pure water?” That is the problem, they don’t want any of their friends to see them selling pure water or plantain chips, so they will prefer their children to do it for them’ (FGP2).

‘Some of us parents don’t want to trade because we are ashamed that some of our friends will see us selling something like pure water. They don’t want to start a small business with the small money they get, so they buy the pure water and their children go and sell it for them while they sit at home’ (PP4).

‘The parents want the children to be doing everything. She will say she cannot hawk. She is ashamed. Some others will say that the money is too small for them as adults, and they will prefer that their children use it to buy goods and sell instead’ (FGP5).

Although all the participants interviewed did trade, contrary to the views above about the reason behind mothers’ decisions to send their children to trade instead of doing it themselves, a few participants (see PP2) as previously stated by some of the child participants, emphasised that some mothers are compelled to send their children to trade because they are nursing mothers or they are ill.

‘Some of these women, you cannot really blame them, some of them have small children that they cannot leave alone at home, while some others may be very sick or something, that is why they are not able to trade sometimes’ (PP2).

However, other participants referred to the fact that when children are in need of anything, they always demand such things from their mothers and not their fathers, and that the only way mothers can meet those needs is to send the children to trade. Other participants considered the economic status of some parents (i.e. being unable to provide for the family), as the reason some parents send their children to trade.

‘But sometimes, you cannot blame us women too much, because if our children need anything they will never go and ask their father, they will always come to us their mother, and we have to do something about it, and the only way is for our children to help us by trading’ (FGP1).

‘Any girl that does this activity especially during school hours does it because the parents are poor. Any girl doing this activity wants to use it to help their parents’ (FGP3).

‘Look at the small girl that was selling the other day, she was so small that we had to stop her and collected the pure water she was selling from her. She should be about five years. She said it was because her mother doesn’t have money to train her in school, that is why she asked her to go and hawk pure water sometimes’ (FGP2).

‘Any child that hawks is not born with a silver spoon. You cannot expect a child that is born with a silver spoon to hawk’ (PP3).

Other participants concluded that some parents find it better and more profitable to take their children to trade with them on the market stall or more often to send them to trade by themselves in the market, while their mothers are also selling on the stall. Participants said that this is because children are perceived to sell more when they trade on their own, with more goods sold and more profits made in a shorter period (see PP3).

‘When my daughter helped me to sell (because she hawked around the market while I stayed in the store), before you know it, I have finished selling everything which can bring more profits and I can also buy more goods for sale again’ (PP3).

Participants referred to buyers/customers preferring to buy from children that trade than from adults.

‘When these children sometimes help us to trade, you see that before you know it, they have finished selling everything. If you send them again, they will still finish selling

very quickly. I think that customers sometimes prefer to buy from these children than from us' (FGP2).

'I think it is because some of these customers don't need to start looking for where to buy what they need since they can see the children hawking it in the market' (FGP1).

'Sometimes, you don't regret it at all when these children help you as they are faster than we, their parents. What will sometimes take us 3 hours to sell, will not take them 30 minutes' (PP3).

Most participants referred to the positive impact that trading has on children's lives.

'It will make the children strong and hardworking' (FGP2).

'It will also make her grow into a responsible woman as expected so that she can be able to take care of her family too when she gets married' (FGP1).

'Children that trade are very bold and wise, which can help them to be successful when they start their business' (PP4).

Contrary to the above, which was the perception of most participants, a few believed that such activity would affect the children negatively and could endanger their lives. Although participants do not ascribe these dangers directly to the trading of their own children, they acknowledge the danger involved in the lives of children that trade generally.

'Some of these children face a lot of danger when they sell. The girls get themselves pregnant, the boys are recruited into gang where they may turn out to become armed robbers or "agberos" ²³' (PP1).

'All these children that you see selling, many of them are affected because of this selling they do, especially those children that are left alone to go home by themselves, they see a lot of dangers when it is getting dark ... anything can happen to them, no one is there. Some of these bad men can approach them and want to force them; some more wicked ones can kidnap them to make money' (PP4).

However, some participants had mixed perceptions generally about children's participation in

²³ See detailed discussion in chapter 6 section 6.4.2.

trading. The participants believed that it would be good for children to trade in order to develop the numerous positive behaviours that would make them responsible. However, they also referred to the negative impact and dangerous outcomes when the children trade.

'I believe that it is good that children are trying to help their parents, but sometimes the child can join bad [dangerous] gangs if not closely monitored' (PP1).

'That is, young boys also end up becoming wayward children in the streets and markets after trading, they then grow to become conductors, where they end up joining cult (gangs) where they are used by politicians as their boys to terrorize their political opponents' (FGP3).

'For the boys, they have been initiated into cultism, and once they are in it, you will see all these politicians will start using them and paying them big money' (FGP1).

'From the children's cult, they move into the adult cult, then from the adult cult they move into the big men's cult, where they are used by all these big people in politics. Cultism is grade by grade. It is not expected that somebody that grew up trading in the market and then moving to become "agbero" to just grow up and become very successful as described, it is hard' (FGP4).

A few of the participants further stated that due to this, their children assist them only when they (the participants) are in the market trading, so that their children can be monitored.

'Yes, right from primary school these days, children are initiated into cultism even as young as 10 years. There are children's cults that they are initiated into. That is why even if they have to trade, they need to be monitored, as I used to do when my children helped me. I make sure we go home together once we finish selling' (FGP2).

On the other hand, participants referred to girls becoming involved in behaviours that can jeopardise their future lives. Participants explained that girls that are left by their parents to trade on their own often fall into the hands of miscreants who take advantage of their vulnerability and innocence, and such girls are sexually assaulted. Participants referred to how some girls are raped, while others are lured into relationships that may endanger their lives. Still others become victims of sex slavery.

'Through this process of trading, if you don't monitor them, they start sleeping around with men and they may most often get pregnant at a very tender age' (FGP1).

‘This activity spoils (destroys) a lot of these children, a situation where many of these children get themselves pregnant, especially the girls’ (FGP4).

‘Through this process, you see young female girls getting themselves pregnant and giving birth to unwanted babies’ (FGP3).

‘Some of these girls can be deceived by some of these men and then be raped. They even use some of them for rituals²⁴’ (PP1).

One participant particularly believed that trading was the major reason her daughter became pregnant and subsequently dropped out of secondary education. She summed it up with this excerpt:

‘Sometimes I think that it is because my daughter was helping me to sell, that was why she did not know anything, and she got pregnant and could not go to school again. It even affected her because she started stealing my money and buying useless things even when she knew that it would affect all of us. So I think some of the problems it may cause later can be more than what we gain at the beginning’ (PP3).

In this section participants have considered various parental roles in child trading. Participants described not only their own roles, but the roles of other parents when their children trade and the impact it has on the children’s lives. Participants discuss the dangers associated with trading as children navigate their way from trading to other labour activities that endanger their lives. Although the dangers are analysed by the parent participants, these analyses are not ascribed to their own children being endangered in the process of trading, rather the dangers are ascribed to children sent to trade by other parents.

The next section, which presents details of the third layer of analysis, involves findings on the policy context of child trading.

5.5 POLICY CONTEXT OF CHILD TRADING

This section presents the findings from interviews undertaken with social workers, with responses from a small number of parents. In-depth interviews were conducted with all four

²⁴ Ritual killing is a common practice in Nigeria where some human parts, such as the breast, tongue, and sexual organs are required by witchdoctors, traditional medicine men, for some forms of sacrifices or magical potions assumed to make people rich and/or powerful (Igwe, 2004).

of the social workers recruited for the study. However, prior to discussing the different sub-themes generated from the findings, Table 11 below provides brief background information of the social work participants in the study. There were four social workers selected for the in-depth interview. Their selection was based on their role as social workers in the family and children unit of the Department of Child Development. Their age, gender, level of education and the years of experience in the department of child development are tabulated below.

Table 11: Social Work Participants' background information

Social work participants	Age	Gender	Level of Education	Years of experience in dept. of child development
SWP1	34	Female	University graduate (1 st degree)	5 years
SWP2	30	Female	University graduate (1 st degree)	3 years
SWP3	41	Male	University graduate (1 st degree)	7 years
SWP4	38	Male	University graduate (2 nd degree)	8 years

Social workers' and parents' have different perceptions of the reasons behind why parents send their children to trade. It is not my intention in this thesis to determine which are the correct interpretations, just to make it clear that the distinctions between the parents' and the social workers' perceptions are noticeable. For example, parents highlight the fact that they feel compelled by socio-economic factors to send their children to trade. This could be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand it could be understood as a rational decision because of their economic status, while on the other hand social workers could see it as socio-cultural values possibly influencing them to resort to child trading, rather than seeking other solutions to their economic plight.

Social workers referred to the dilemma that emerges when government adopts children's rights in its legislation but undermines these rights by supporting a more traditional approach to childhood trading and fails to enforce or support the legislation. While on the one hand it appears that government genuinely wants to reduce if not eradicate child labour with the adoption of child rights, social workers suggested that this can only be possible if government adopts a careful approach to the issue.

5.5.1 The Family as a Socio-economic Unit

Social workers referred to behaviours that exacerbate child trading as most often influenced by the importance that the community ascribes to gender and roles within the family. For example, participants referred to male children as more valued than females because male children continue the family name throughout their life, while female children resort to their husband's family name once they are married.

'Especially because of the issue of this family that must continue. Women, once they are married, their father's name is dead, because they will start answering their husband's name; but the men continue to retain their fathers' name. So, for that name to continue, they will prefer male children than female' (SWP1).

Participants acknowledge that the cultural pressure to have male children makes some mothers have more children than they can afford to support, which leads to some households having large families. The cause of looking for a particular gender creates pressure on mothers and contributes to the proliferation of large families. Most of the participants said that when these children become too many and beyond the parents' capacity of care due to lack of adequate funds, their mothers resort to sending the children to trade. While lack of adequate funds which reflects the social status of parents may be the reason for children being sent to trade, the social workers' social construction is that the lack of funds is directly linked to having a large family which is due to the cultural preference for the boy child rather than girl.

'The problem is that the culture has allowed them to have as many children as they want. Assuming a woman has girls, she will want a boy because pressure will be on her from the extended family members demanding male children from her because of the fear that if the man dies without the woman having a male child, there will be no continuity of the family name. Because of this perception, the woman will keep reproducing and they will then have many children. She will be unable to care for all the children, so the children are then turned to the streets and markets to start trading' (SWP4).

'Sometimes you see these women having a lot of children because they are afraid that if they don't have the gender their husband and his family need (at least one male child), it will affect their marriage. Because of that fear, they will not stop ... sometimes they will have up to six, seven, eight, nine children they never planned for because they are looking for a male child. Sometimes the pressure to have at least one male child

does not come from the man and his family alone, even the woman's family contribute to the woman's decision to have more children' (SWP3).

'You just feel that you will have many children for you to end up using them for farm work or for labour or something, when you know you cannot take care of them. That is the problem. I think they don't even think of the fact that they can't take care of the children, they are sometimes more concerned about the fact that they don't have a male child and which she may feel does not make her marriage safe' (SWP2).

Social workers' construct of the reasons behind a parent's decision to send their children to trade, (similar to some of the parents' perceptions)²⁵ points to the cultural value placed on the importance of male children as against females. Parents' ways of rationalising this cultural value overrides the reality that they may be unable to care for the number of children they eventually have, which can affect the family's economic condition.

Most of the participants referred to the culture of communal living where parents give their children to extended family members or relations that are more economically fortunate to help take care of their children. Other participants referred to the culture of dependence on members of the extended family to assist in the care of the children when parents have unplanned large families. Participants said that members of the extended family, however, also send the children to trade in order to be able to afford to give adequate care to the children.

'It is something that has always been part of our society, a kind of communal living, where if a parent happens not to have enough to take care of his family, he can give out some of the children to relatives that they think may be economically comfortable, so that these children can help to care for them, but most times such relatives also send the children to trade' (SWP3).

'Having had more children than they were originally prepared for, because of our culture where our relations can also help us take care of our children especially if they live in the city, most parents will give their children to their relations in the city, and the relations will be using these children by sending them to trade in exchange for the care they will receive from these relatives' (SWP4).

Just like some of the parents, social workers made the link between parents' own experience of working as children in markets and on farms, and what their expectations were of their own children.

²⁵See chapter 5, section 5.4.2 for parents' quotes.

'People decide to have many children, having it in mind that, for example, the children will help them in their farm. It is the same mind-set they have when they send their children to trade for them. You just feel like in the past, when many children were born for farm work or for labour or something, you can also have many children now, they will trade' (SWP2).

Some of the participants said that parents referred to their cultural traditions as an explanation for polygamy and large families, which can adversely affect them as they may not have enough funds to care for their children. This may result in a cycle of transfer in trading.

'That is the problem, you cannot limit the man because of the culture, they will tell you that their forefathers married as many wives as they wanted because culture demands it, so that is the problem. As the baby is growing the trade is passed on to the baby, it becomes a kind of chain reaction' (SWP4).

Participants stressed parents' high level expectation that their children would do what they did when they themselves were young, especially in terms of daily activities. Some of the participants suggested the need to raise awareness so that parents could understand that their children do not need to do what they did when they were young.

'That is why we are trying to create awareness that for the fact that you sell in the market doesn't mean that your child must also do the same thing, or your child must also sell in the market' (SWP3).

'Because these parents are ignorant, they don't know that their children have rights, because that is how they grew up, so they feel that just as they grew up, their children should also grow up the same way. That is why I continue to say that they are very, very ignorant' (SWP1).

SWP1 emphasised this issue by giving the example of a parent she has been sensitising against sending her children to trade, even though the parent had gone through the same experience she is putting her children through.

'I have a family that I have been talking to for some time now. I told the woman, I said, madam you should not allow your child to do this. She actually went through that situation when she was growing up, she sells in the market, and she now has her own children and she still asks her children to be selling in the market' (SWP1).

Some of the participants mentioned that there are members of the family other than the children's parents (mothers) who also send the children to trade:

'Both mothers and grandmothers send their children to trade. They do it. It's not limited to their biological mothers alone' (SWP3).

'Because of the extended family system, some parents will give one or two of their children to their mothers, so that their children can also help their mother' (SWP4).

5.5.2 The Economic Status of Parents

All participants agreed that the socio-economic status of parents plays a significant role in parents' decisions to send their children to trade. Participants referred to the problem of being unable to earn enough to take care of the basic needs of their family, which affects their ability to care for the needs of their children due to some parents' unemployed status, or for others who were employed, low wages. Participants acknowledged that parents were forced to rely on their children's trading activity to provide for the family.

'Because parents that are doing well will not go and buy a bag of pure water to give to her child to sell, so sometimes you have to look at that area of poverty. They send them out to go and hawk because there is no money. Basically it is an economic problem, where some of these parents don't even have a decent job' (SWP3).

'Parents ought to take care of their children, but they cannot, because they are poor, they don't have the money, so instead of the parents taking care of the children, it is the children that are taking care of them, because they feel it is their right' (SWP4).

A number of participants referred to efforts made by the government, through free enrolment of children in school, to stop children being able to justify trading by using the excuse of not being able to pay their school fees.

'Some may say we don't have money to go to school, that's why we are trading. Government at times tries to put them in school and care for them, especially government schools, which most of these children are often enrolled in' (SWP2).

There was some discussion about the prevention of trading through poverty alleviation, employment opportunities and financially supporting parents through the provision of loans. All the participants agreed that wherever parents are gainfully employed and/or provided with

enough funds in the form of a loan, there is poverty reduction. This, they felt, might be a help in reducing the rate at which children are sent to trade by their parents.

'The government can fully employ them (the parents), so that if they have money, they won't send their children out to go and sell for them' (SWP2).

'If you ask some of these parents, they will tell you they don't have a job and they also don't have enough money to start off their own business. So, the little money they have, they are using it to send their children to trade' (SWP3).

'Some parents capitalise on the fact that they did it when they were young to send their children to trade. Assuming government is able to provide loans for them to start a reasonable business they may stop sending their children. The government can even deal with them more appropriately if their children are found trading, because they are being financially supported by the government, so they will have no reason to send their children' (SWP1).

However, participants were also of the notion that child trading is exacerbated because parents believe that they have full rights over their children and they are ignorant of their children's rights.

5.5.3 Awareness of Rights within the Family

Participants reported that children's inability to refuse doing what they are told to do by adults, especially their parents, is because parents have prioritised their own rights over their children's. They said that one of the reasons parents do not always seek their children's opinion on matters that concerned them was because the children's feelings are never considered, neither are the children given the opportunity to make choices. They emphasised parents' beliefs that they have all the right to send their children to trade, despite the children's feelings.

'Parents think that their children are too young to have a choice. I don't think it ever occurs to them that they should ask their children what they feel about what they are doing, especially as children, because they think that they are giving their children the opportunity to become spoilt children' (SWP2).

'They even feel that yes, because I gave birth to this child, it means that this child should sell from here to there, do this, do that. This is very wrong as they don't allow the children to choose whether to sell or not' (SWP3).

'You know, in this part of the world where we come from, parents, not only parents even, every adult is always right where children are. Adults don't ever think about what the children think or feel when they are ordering the children to do what they demand them to do. In short, a child has nothing to say where adults are concerned; they are not given that opportunity because adults feel that the children don't know anything. And even if they do, they are too young to take decisions' (SWP4).

A few of the participants identified ignorance as one of the reasons parents send their children to trade. They referred to parents being uninformed about the rights of their children in matters that concerned the children. Some of the participants felt that the parents' ignorance affects the children.

'I continue to say that it is ignorance on the part of the parents that is making them send their children to trade. They feel it is their right, overlooking the right of the child' (SWP1).

'Children are not in school. When they are not in school, they are not educated, ignorance continues. The ignorance of their parents, the illiteracy of their parents is continuously manifested by the children as they are sent to trade' (SWP4).

'It has affected them because a child that is supposed to be in school at a particular hour, and you send that child to go and sell for you, he has missed that day's lesson and will not get it back. That is pure ignorance on the part of the parent to have deprived that child' (SWP2).

Some of the parents participants stated that it is not considered that their children should have any rights as this will affect their moral behaviour to their parents as they may become disrespectful and disobedient.

'They are my children and they are supposed to do what I say and what I send them to do. I don't know the type of right you are saying that children have, which means they will not listen to us their parents then when we talk to them' (FGP2).

'If you give this children too much freedom, before you know, they will not respect you again, they will start talking to you as if you are their mate. That is why I don't tolerate any nonsense from them' (PP3).

The parent participants are of the view that children's attitudes should be managed, otherwise the children become disrespectful and uncontrollable if not restricted. This indicates that

parents are less aware or not aware at all of the rights of their children. The parents' perception is that children are not in a position to decide nor are they to be put in such a position.

5.5.4 Social Workers' Perception of the Impact of Child Trading

Participants referred to some parents as people that send their children to trade not because they are poor but rather because they want their children to learn about the family business and have control over the business when they become adults.

'For those that are hawking, that believe that because they did that their children should do it, they are not suffering, they may have a way of protecting their children, guiding them, and they just want them to be business-minded or industrious as it is expected in the family. Because some of these families have businesses, they will want their children to continue, so they have to start learning the business right from when they are children' (SWP3).

'Some of these parents that you see their children assisting them to trade in the market, it is not that they are poor. Some of these women have their own personal house that they built by themselves. They just want their children to be hard-working like themselves. That is why they encourage their children to assist them' (SWP4).

All participants emphasised the negative impact of trading on the lives of children, where children become prey to many dangers as they trade. Participants referred to children being exposed to an unfavourable environment when not monitored, which can often leave the female children susceptible to promiscuity.

'The environment was not convenient for her but she was selling inside, and it had a negative influence on her. And at this time the father was now complaining she was now sleeping with different boys because she has had a taste of it' (SWP3).

'A taste of what?' (Researcher).

'Well, a taste of life out there, by sleeping with boys and they give her some little change (money) to buy stuff that she likes. She then thinks that life out there is better, because she has been exposed through the trading activity she is doing' (SWP3).

'Prostitution is thriving. A lot of girls are raped. The problem also has to do with promiscuity. You see a girl who gets pregnant for somebody, probably she leaves her home. She is from a broken home. She gets pregnant for another person again after having the first one' (SWP4).

‘Some of these girls end up with unwanted babies because they have been exposed to an unfavourable environment that will affect their lives. Some of them may not even know the father of their child and they give birth to a bastard child that will bring disgrace to them and their family’ (SWP1).

Most participants also referred to the effect of trading on the lives of the boys. They stressed that children, especially boys, can easily be recruited into gangs by their peers. Such gangsterism was referred to as cultism, which lead them into different kinds of criminality that include drug taking and armed robbery. Participants stressed that children socialise with other children that they meet when trading who may introduce them to other businesses, which create opportunities for them to be involved in all types of criminal activities that may be detrimental to their long-term prospects. As the children continue to grow and mature, participants emphasised that they (often the boys) become involved in other areas of child labour, that may lead some of them to become employed by politicians as political thugs to help the politicians in their political pursuits.

‘While the boys start moving with the recalcitrant that will introduce them to drugs and cults that will affect them for life. They are introduced to other work like conductor jobs, which some of these children’s parents may not even know about. They will then graduate from conductor to become tax collector. It is usually from one stage to another. They also learn how to tell lies through this process. And some of these children, the girls, can get themselves impregnated by these recalcitrant boys’ (SWP1).

‘He will start learning other vices and then you see them becoming what they call the street child; there is a word they normally use to refer to these street children known as ‘lema’²⁶. They feel that they are a clique, they know themselves. They start smoking igbo (Indian hemp/cannabis/hard drugs). They completely stop selling for their parents as their friends talk to them about other jobs that they can get better money. From there they move to the higher level of cult, where they are introduced to friends that recruit them to become thieves or armed robbers and political thugs’ (SWP2).

‘So you have a lot of criminality there, like pickpockets. There is sexual harassment and sexual abuse all over the place and even decent girls that just pass through the market, sometimes some of these boys end up tapping them on the back or passing sexual comments. There are so many problems that it is bringing, that we in the office still try to tackle. They bring in rape cases, stealing and other vices’ (SWP4).

²⁶See chapter 6, section 6.4.2 for more explanation.

Social workers' perception of the trading activity that children undertake indicate that children who are involve in trading navigate from this activity to other child labour activities that may negatively affect their lives in the future.

Although it is noticeable that none of the children in my study were involved in the kind of danger that the social workers talked about, it is reflected in my data that it is important to reflect on social workers' fears and perceptions of the construction of trading rather than the reality being experienced by my participants. Children are often introduced to these negative forms of labour by their peer group, which can also affect the overall education of the children.

5.5.5 Educational Consequences of Child Trading

All social work participants recognised the importance of a child's potential and the rights of every child to education. For education to be prioritised, social workers explained that the government needed to overlook some of the rules that were in place so that education could adequately function and the situation could be controlled. For example, in the case of trading after school hours, social workers explained that it was against the law for children to engage in trading both during and after school hours, but children were allowed to trade after school hours as the authority looked beyond the child's rights and took account of the economic conditions of their parents specifically, and the community in general (see SWP4).

'Most of these children that we label, they are the ones feeding their family, especially those that do it after the school period. For instance, a child that is going to sell pure water. A bag of pure water is bought for ₦100.00 (Nigerian currency), the child buys the pure water and then sells the same quantity of pure water for ₦200.00.

The child is able to make a profit of about ₦100.00. It could even be more than that profit if he or she sells more than that quantity. That is a profit that will go a long way to help the family' (SWP4).

Some of the social work participants said the government should be more concerned about children trading during school hours rather than after school hours as they felt that children assist their parents after school hours. They said that the government was less concerned over after-school hours as this does not affect the education of the children.

'We assume that they are assisting their parents, but we concentrate more on during school hours, because by the time you put so much pressure on them to completely stop the children from assisting them even after the school period, it will create more harm than good. That is why we concentrate specifically on trading during the school period' (SWP2).

'Government are trying to check this aspect of child trading during school hours, it has been an issue that government have been trying to do something about. After they have solved that, they can then move a step forward' (SWP1).

Most of the social workers referred to one of the various ways in which government have tried to reduce the rate at which parents send their children to trade. This was by introducing the free education policy. However, social workers differed in their views compared to parents and children in the study. While parents and children argued that the children's reading and writing materials were provided by parents, social workers disagreed with the claim.

'Both the parents and child participants said that the money that is paid for writing and reading materials is even more than what the government pay for the children's tuition. What have you to say about that?' (Researcher).

'I want to let you know that even books are free. The text books are free. There was a day I was listening to a programme on television, there were complaints parents claimed that they were asked to buy text books and somebody from the ministry of education responded that there are text books, new text books that have not been used, that have been given to children. You don't sell them' (SWP1).

'In this country we have free education, free education is meant for children/parents that cannot afford primary and basic education, that's why we have free education so that you can go to school. The government is responsible for all their educational needs. They are not supposed to be in the market trading' (SWP4).

Some of the social workers argued that the government overlooked the after-school-hours trading by children because they were trying to avoid taking action against parents. They referred to wares sold after school hours as being taxed by the government revenue collectors and paid by the children that trade.

A number of social workers argued that, in addition to the tuition fees, the government also provided reading and writing materials for the children so that they could attend school. However, as previously stated by the parents, they emphasised that they are more financially responsible for their children's education than the government. Most of the parents argued that

the free education policy that the government introduced was only a farce, as the government was only responsible for the children's tuition fees, which are minimal compared to the other educational needs which the parents have to provide.

'The government will always say they give free education to all children in primary and secondary school, but what they really do is that the children don't pay school fees but pay for every other thing. You have to buy books, biros, pencils and every other thing. We parents even have to pay for exams and tests that the children will do through their school years and the government keep saying that they are providing free education. How?' (PP2).

'There is nothing that is free in public school, at the beginning of every term you pay for this or that ... like chairs and tables, books, brooms, everything. Before you know it, the money you pay will even be far more than the school fees that they sing about as free' (PP3).

'Children in government school don't pay school fees, but they pay for every other thing that they need in school' (FGP5).

'If you really look at it, other things that we pay for are even more than the school fees and yet they will say education is free' (FGP2).

Similarly, most parents further argued that even though children contribute to the cost of their education by trading, when children trade, the trading activity affects the children's education. Parent participants referred to frequent lateness and absence from school by the children as affecting academic performance and possibly concentration in class. They also said that the children may eventually drop out of school as they continue to trade because of their daily access to cash in the process of trading. Parents conclude that children's access to the money they make from trading on a daily basis encourages them to buy snacks for themselves whenever they want. Parents conclude that because the children have access to money on a daily basis, they get used to the freedom of having their own spending money) and this can negatively affect the children's attitude to school.

'Once a child starts hawking and handling money, it will be hard for such a child to be able to attend school, because a child that frequently handles money has already calculated how much he/she is going to get from the sales' (FGP4).

'My view is that when children hawk or sell and they get used to handling money, it becomes very difficult for such children to be able to concentrate on their studies in school. At the end it will affect them' (FGP3).

'Though my child was helping me very well when she was selling for me, because just now we have finished selling, but it also affected her. She was no more going to school, I did not know. She will steal my money and be buying useless things. At the end, she got pregnant' (PP3).

Most of the parent participants argued that the majority of the children that trade were often late or absent from school at the beginning of the school term, when they need to be preparing themselves for the start of a new term or session. The children need also to have their reading and writing materials ready for the term or session.

'The problem is that we mothers will wait till the last minute before we start rushing to buy the children's school things. Sometimes the children will not even have shoes to wear to school on their first day at school. It is the money that the children make the first few days of school that their mother will use to buy what the children need' (PP4).

'When school just begins, parents must buy the things that the children need to read and write, if not their teacher will drive them away from school. That is why you see most of these children hawking in the first few days, even sometimes they hawk for more than a week at the beginning of the term before they later join other children that have already started' (FGP3).

Some parents said that children that are very intelligent and outstanding in their studies remain so even if they trade. A few parent participants argued that trading would not deprive a child from becoming a very successful adult that their parents and the community would be proud of (see FGP1 quote below). However, others argued that education is always affected when children trade and attend school at the same time. FGP2 specifically gave the example of how she was negatively affected by combining trading with school attendance as a young child.

'There are some children that are naturally intelligent, even though they trade for their parents after school. Once they get home, they start reading. Like my children, the day they write an exam they don't sleep, they read throughout the night, till about 4.00am' (FGP1).

'You cannot be selling and be going to school at the same time; you will not be able to cope. It will affect the child just as it has affected me because I spent most of my time

trading when I was young, so I was unable to complete my education. I can hardly read or write. I am only able to write my name and my father's name' (FGP2).

Although the government advises against trading during school hours, participants argued that this is not effective because no alternatives are provided, and children are made to pay tax in exchange for wares found with them whether during or after school hours. Participants stressed that there is an increased rate of child trading because children are allowed to continue trading once they have paid tax, whether during or after school hours. Overall, most participants agreed that trading can have a more negative than positive impact on school attendance.

5.5.6 Anti-trading Initiatives

All the social work participants discussed various ways in which the government tried to limit child trading. One of the major anti-trading initiatives they identified that the government used is to place fines on the wares that are sold by the children after school hours, while the children who trade during school hours, when caught, are arrested.

'If the law is against child trading, why are taxes collected from children who trade? Are you not encouraging the children to continue trading since the government is indirectly gaining from it by collecting tax?' (Researcher).

'No, the tax is for the things that the children are selling. The thing is, they don't tax you based on your size or age, they tax you based on the goods that you are selling, because they feel that it is your parents that gave you the goods that you are selling. So they don't tax the children, they only tax the goods' (SWP2).

'But don't you think that will encourage parents to continue sending their children since they are paying tax?' (Researcher).

'You can only stop it through a gradual process. That is why those that sell during school hours are arrested while those that sell after school hours are fined. Once the school hours' trades are completely stopped, then the government can gradually start stopping the children from trading after school hours. Nothing can be done for now. It's a gradual thing' (SWP2).

Most of the social workers said that it would become problematic if children were deprived of trading, as it might make some parents become violent and aggressive in the process of

defending their rights to send their children to trade. Some of the social workers said this dilemma occurred most often when the children trade after school hours.

'Talking about these parents, the moment we embark on raiding after school hours, it can cause a lot of chaotic conditions whereby parents become very violent and aggressive, asking "what do you want us to do, is it a crime for us to send our children, is it a crime for us to be sending our children to hawk for us, after all, is it not after school hours? Does it mean that parents don't have a right to send their children wherever they want?" You see them complaining that their children are assisting them, at the end more problems will be created instead of solving the problem, that is why government is very careful in finding solutions to the problems' (SWP4).

'Because someone can say it is my child and all that. They have the right and sometimes she will go to the extent of embarrassing you or harassing you, "why will you stop my child? Why will you take my child?" They think they are right but it is ignorance, they don't know what the law says' (SWP1).

Social work participants referred to further measures taken by government in discouraging children from trading during school hours by raiding markets and arresting children found trading. Some of them discussed the arrest of children who trade during school hours, how the children are remanded and their wares seized until their parents come for them. The children are then released to their parents, who also collect their wares, once the fines have been paid.

'We raid these children during school hours. Pick them up, bring them to the office and at times we take them, we remand them, take them to the remand homes, where their parents come for them' (SWP1).

'Sometimes their parents don't come to the office on time to collect their children, so when it is close of the day, we will have no choice but to remand the children in the rehabilitation centre for their parents to claim the next day' (SWP4).

Moreover, social workers emphasised the rehabilitation of children who may be moving from trading activities to becoming street children, so that they can be corrected and dissuaded from going back onto the street. According to the social workers, the children's parents are contacted and invited. The children are then released to their parents after advising them against neglecting their children and risking them becoming subject to negative peer influence. Social workers said that such opportunities were also used to sensitise the children and their parents against trading activity.

'Although this depends on how it is, we go out to raid, and when we raid these children, their parents come. When they come, that's the medium for us to sensitise the parents and tell them the penalties involved in sending their children to trade. We also inform them of the dangers involved when their children are left alone in the streets and markets' (SWP2).

'Several times the Ministry has come out to raid these children to ensure that their parents do not allow them to hawk in the streets or in the marketplaces. The Ministry is doing a lot to curtail those excesses, but it is very challenging' (SWP3).

'There was a time we frequently raided the streets and markets, we removed the children and seized the wares that they were selling. After some time, the raiding will subside because most of these children are not seen. They escape before you even get hold of them. But in the end before you know it, the market is filled again, they are all back in the market again trading. There is nothing you can do. You then start arresting all over again. It is like a vicious circle' (SWP4).

Some of the social workers acknowledged the presence of other government agencies that assisted them when they raided and arrested children caught trading during school hours. The police, in particular, played a major role:

'We have a monitoring team that goes out for raiding and to monitor what is going on in the field. We do it quarterly but at times of urgency we do it monthly and for us to be able to make any arrest, the police must be with us and we will also need big vehicles like vans to transfer the children caught to the office. That is why we have to be well prepared' (SWP2).

'Once we are about to go to raid these children that are selling in the markets during school hours, we seek assistance from the police force who will help us with the arrests' (SWP4).

Most of the parent participants agreed with the social workers about agencies like the police force that are involved in the arrest of children who trade. They emphasised the farce being acted out when these children are arrested and they referred to huge disappointments surrounding efforts made by the government to limit the trading activities of children because of bribery and corruption in the police force. A majority of the parents agreed that most of the police officers assigned to raid and arrest the children are offered money by parents or sometimes even by the children that are arrested. This disrupts the prosecution of children. Parents reported that the children are often released before they get to the police station, as money would be offered to the officers on the way. Once released, the children go back to the

market and continue trading. Most of the parents and some of the social workers acknowledged that due to bribery and corruption there would be a continuous challenge to attempts made by government to reduce child trading.

'When these children are arrested, as they are being taken away the officers that arrested them are given some money after much pleading from the children, and the children are left to continue with their trading' (FGP4).

'It will be very difficult to stop children from hawking both in the markets and streets, because even if they tried to stop them from doing it by arresting the children, the same officers that arrested the children are those that are corrupting these children by collecting small money from them as they are taking them away' (FGP3).

'The parents of these children sometimes also meet the officers and give them some money as a form of bribe. The officers will not hand over this money in the office, and the officer will warn the children and their parents not to do it again, and they will release them to go. But even with the warning, the children will still go back to the market immediately' (FGP5).

'I cannot vouch for the police officers because they can never be trusted, I know they are dubious, and they can take bribe as small as #20.00 when they are desperate, so I believe they could be involved in such a thing. It is not something I will just completely agree with and if they or other agencies like the task force in these government offices are involved, then it makes trading more difficult to tackle' (SWP4).

Most of the parent participants also referred to the police collecting money from both parents and their children when the children are arrested and taken to the police station. Participants said that this is similar to what is happening across the country and in every government parastatal in the country.

'There is no way bribery and corruption can be stopped in this country. It is not possible because it is in everywhere, both in government and private business' (FGP2).

'The corruption starts from the top, so it will be difficult to stop. Once the officers that patrol in the market areas have been given money by those trading, the officers also make some returns to the office. Assuming they are arrested, and they allow them to stay in custody, they wouldn't have continued to hawk' (FGP1).

'Even in the different offices, corruption is everywhere, so it is only a small part of it that we see is operating between parents and police or government people' (PP1).

The majority of the parents agreed that government had in place laws guarding against child trading but concluded that bribery and corruption, which cut across all government parastatals, make it difficult for child trading activity to be addressed. Similarly, a number of social workers who also referred to the aspect of bribery and corruption did not direct their views to the police force organisation alone, but generalised their views across the nation.

Finally, some social workers affirmed that the worst scenarios among children that trade were cases of children who left their homes and decided to live on the streets. Such children were said to be corrected through rehabilitation, although social workers said the rehabilitation process was not effective. Nevertheless, they said that they use such means to try to dissuade the children from going back to the streets. Other social workers said that street children undergoing rehabilitation were thoroughly sensitised against going back to the street and when they are released to their parents, close monitoring is maintained with the family, with the support from the social workers.

5.5.7 Sensitisation and Awareness Programmes

Most social work participants agreed that policy implementation measures where children and parents are sensitised about the rights of children was one of the major areas where government use their power. They referred to rights guided by laws which were adopted to fight against the economic exploitation of children and violation of the rights of children by their parents. Some of the social workers affirmed that children were sensitised to become aware of their rights, especially in relation to being given the right to education and protection from trading. A number of participants argued that bringing the child rights law to the level of understanding by the children inspired the state government to create a simplified version of the law. Social workers further reported that copies of the simplified version were being distributed to all public and private primary and secondary schools and disseminated by the school authority to the children.

‘We have come up with a simplified version of the child right law, so the children can easily understand what their rights are all about and so that the opportunity can be used also to enlighten the parents’ (SWP4).

'Because when the Edo State simplified version of the rights of the child was out, it was launched, it was distributed to schools and there was follow-up sensitisation in schools' (SWP2).

'We go to different schools, both primary and secondary schools. We have been able to print a lot of the simplified version of the child rights law. We put a lot of programmes in place that have to do with children' (SWP1).

A few of the social workers referred to sensitisation going beyond the children's school environment to homes, markets and churches, to enlighten parents and relations on the rights of their children. The creation of awareness is to prevent children from continuous participation in trading as they and their parents familiarise themselves with the children's rights.

'We have gone to various schools and shared the child rights law copies to children. We have gone to churches and shared it. We have tried to talk to people about it. We have also gone to the markets to speak to people about it' (SWP4).

Some of the social workers also discussed other means of sensitisation that could improve both the children's and their parents' awareness of children's rights. These include the use of jingles, gazettes, posters, fliers and signboards in disseminating information about the rights of the child. The information was also translated to pidgin English to bring the sensitisation to the lowest level of understanding.

'There are jingles around that talk about the child rights law, which says that the child has a right. Jingles and adverts around the streets, in so many places for parents ... There are jingles all around, pidgin English jingles that talk about the child having a right' (SWP1).

'It is on the news, on air. Pamphlets and leaflets are distributed across the city to bring awareness to the people' (SWP3).

However, some of the social workers argued that the sensitisation has not been broad enough to include all parents across the community as it was most often centred on parents who trade in the markets. For parents that do not trade but send their children to trade for them, social work participants stressed that they are less informed of the rights of their children. Some participants believed that the government focus on the awareness programmes has been more centred on sensitising the children rather than their parents on the awareness programmes,

while the fact remains that children are involved in trading because of the parents' decision to send them to the markets. A few of the social workers also acknowledged that efforts have not been geared towards sensitising the public in general to avoid buying wares from children.

'But one area we have not been able to capture is sensitising parents, having a forum where we are able to talk to parents concerning the child right laws' (SWP1).

'We are able to sensitise all children and some few parents, like market women. It is difficult for us to sensitise parents who don't trade, which means we will have to be moving from house to house which could be impossible because of funds that will be needed to do that' (SWP2).

The majority of the social workers suggested that for there to be a positive change in the community in relation to child trading, the government would need to bring the awareness programme to a level where every member of the community could be reached.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This study has significantly enhanced the understanding and perception of stakeholders about the concept of child trading and the experiences of children that trade. Findings showed that although there are other notable factors, for example, the socio-economic status of parents contributing to the exacerbation of child labour in the context of child trading, evidence has shown that socio-cultural factors also have great impact on the experiences of children that trade and on child labour in general.

The findings revealed that the most distinctive childhood decisions about the trading activity that children do were made by mothers, but with the support and approval of fathers. However, evidence has shown that fathers are unable to fulfil their responsibilities in meeting the financial needs of the family in the way that tradition demands and expects from them. Due to the added responsibility of providing the financial support for the household alongside the traditionally assigned role of caring and maintaining the home, mothers feel pressured to send their children to trade so that their children too can help in meeting the economic needs of the household. Although legislation has been put in place to protect children from economic labour and exploitation, economic need and cultural practices undermine the effectiveness of those laws.

CHAPTER 6: CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings of the study drawing across four key issues. Firstly, the chapter gives an overview of the research findings by briefly discussing the understanding of child trading in the context of key cultural values. These include assistance, respect, obedience and responsibility. Secondly, the chapter focuses on understanding parental decision-making in relation to those cultural values. Some of the issues discussed in this section include gender inequality, parental attitudes to child trading and choices among children that trade. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the consequences of child trading. These include issues relating to inadequate education, obstruction of children's rights and the concept of the 'shift process'²⁷ which is a major contribution to knowledge in this thesis as the narratives are expressed by the parents and social work participants. Finally, the fourth discourse involves the tension between rights and welfare approaches in the understanding of child trading. A dynamic and complex picture of the contribution that cultural values brings to child labour in general and child trading in particular has emerged from this thesis.

6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

The literature presented in chapters 2 and 3 shows that there is a range of factors, for example, poverty, that influence a parent's decision to send their child to trade. This study indicates that these are underpinned by cultural values like assistance, respect, obedience, and responsibility, etc., which are all interrelated and are linked to the first research question: How have cultural values influenced parents' decision-making process in sending their children to trade? This chapter will address them as follows:

One of the major drivers for cultural values, for example, assistance, is the participants' view that positive attitudes are generated in children through the trading activity that parents themselves did when they were young; this seems to encourage such parents to send their children to trade. Parents perceived that this would make their children become responsible

²⁷The shift process is discussed in section 6.4.3.

adults. One major issue that was frequently mentioned by all participants in the study is that of the assistance/help that parents expect from their children. Participants acknowledged that assistance is conceptualised as a daily activity that is part of the child's obligation to their parents. Parents themselves seem to see it as their right to be assisted by their children. Assistance is culturally perceived differently by different individual participants in this study. While the children view assistance through trading as part of their duties to meet the financial challenges experienced in the household, parents' view of children's assistance in trading (apart from the financial contribution) is that it creates a positive influence on the physical, emotional and psychological development of the child. Social workers, however, believe that when children assist their parents through trading, if school attendance is compromised it has a long-term negative effect on the child. They also point out however, that when the child is in school, the family economy is affected in two ways; because they are not able to assist their parents in trade, and also because of additional educational expenses like school materials and uniforms. These added expenses can then lead to the child having to abandon school in order to contribute to the family economy. Children and parents thus seem to acknowledge assistance as a positive cultural value while social workers perceive assistance in the context of child trading as a negative cultural influence because of the impact that trading has on the educational lives of the children.

Child labour literature shows that children that work do so to provide economic assistance to their family (Siddiqi and Patrinos, 1995; Yilmaz and Dülgerler, 2011; Sheikh and Prodhan, 2013; Manjengwaa, Matemab, Tirivanhuc, and Tizora, 2016). Assistance in this case is viewed as both support and help from the children to their parents in order to contribute to the needs of the household (Omokhodion and Uchendu, 2010; Buriel, 2012). However, the wider literature has shown that economic deprivation and poverty within the family were often given as the reason why children work in the street. For example, Engle and Black (2008) emphasised that poverty has a multiple, diverse, direct and indirect influence on the development of the child. Indeed, Oberg and Rinaldi (2007) acknowledged that poverty is a complex issue which cannot be treated as a one-dimensional phenomenon because it directly affects the social, physical and developmental needs of children and their families. In order to meet these needs children are made to assist their parents by trading. Findings in this study

indicate that for children to be able to assist their parents there is a level of respect and obedience from the children which is valued among parents.

Participants often mentioned respect and obedience as the main reason for children trading. The child participants viewed respect and obedience as obligations that they utilise in the process of trading. Respect for elders and parents is a value the children said they have to show. Parents' authority and elders' opinions seem to be held as sacrosanct among these children. Bekink (2012) noted that in many African societies including Nigeria, parents and elders are given respect as children show due regard for the feelings, wishes and rights of adults within the community. This is similar to views proposed by other authors, for example, Darling and Steinberg (1993), Aliyu (2006), Dixon, Graber, and Brooks-Gunn (2008), Umar (2009) and Ogbujah (2014), where regards and honour shown to parents or elders in the community are stressed. According to Ogbujah (2014) parental authority is vital in any family, especially as an essential part of community traditions. He further said that for children, every adult is an authority figure. This appears to encourage interdependence within African households, where parents depend on their children to contribute financially to the household, while children depend on their parents to provide the adequate care and maintenance they need. This suggests that the importance of parents' views on the significance of cultural values should not be underestimated. Where these views are not considered, child trading challenges could be difficult to address.

Parents and social work participants believe that obligation in the form of respect and obedience goes with being responsible. Parents take the decision to involve their children in trading or the family business as an informal way to train the child. Participants acknowledge that being responsible as a child reflects well on the family which is to be respected. Such a family is seen by the community to have trained their children to become responsible adults. This is similar to the belief shared by other studies that growing up to become a responsible adult begins from being a responsible child (Ebigbo, 2003; Okoli and Cree, 2012; Buriel, 2012).

Additionally, parents argued that working provided a sense of responsibility to the children and enhanced the child's self-determination, self-esteem and self-confidence through hard work. Literature suggests that children who work are perceived by their parents as being able

to benefit from positive features related to such work that they do, and that this may influence their parents' decision-making process (Ebigbo, 2003; Rogers and Swinnerton, 2005). Such influences include the opportunity for the child to learn the business skills needed to lead to viable future employment. Ebigbo (2003) in his study concludes that parents have the perception that when their children work, it keeps them busy and away from trouble. Other studies argue that work gives children the opportunity to socialise with peers (Hunte and Hozyainova, 2008; Kantor and Hozyainova, 2008; Sim and Hoilund-Carlsen, 2008; Hartjen and Priyadarsini, 2012). Hartjen and Priyadarsini (2012) also argued that responsibility is viewed by parents as an obligation and that it is an economic imperative for children to work in the family business so that the hereditary occupation of the family can be maintained. A key issue here is the emphasis on the importance of historical transference. In this context, there is the general belief that for a family business (including trading) to thrive and be maintained across generations, children must be involved and groomed into the business.

Assistance, respect, obedience and responsibilities were considered key cultural values that contribute to parents' decision in sending their children to trade. However, the coping ability and resilience of children that trade enabled some of these children to be able to deal with the hazards that are associated with trading. Resilience is therefore considered as it applies to the children's coping strategy in the process of trading.

Although resilience was not explicitly expressed by the children, during the interviews this emerged as significant as I observed the resilience displayed by the children while trading. Some of the children displayed this quality by continuing to trade alongside attending school and in the midst of different challenges, for example, when a child continues to trade when sick or during dangerous weather conditions. For some of the parent participants, however, there is the belief that despite the challenges faced by some of the children who trade, children are still able to perform well and complete their education. Liborio and Ungar (2010) argued that some children are able to sustain competence during pressure, and able to develop coping strategies in the midst of continued stress. This begs the question as to the number of children and the category of children that are able to cope with the conditions of trading as compared to the experience of those that are less resilient.

Parents in this study viewed the child's capacity to overcome various difficult physical, social, economic and emotional circumstances as evidence of the child's competence and resilience, seeing this a positive sign of the child's development and to be welcomed. (Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky, 1999). According to Engle, Castle, and Menon (1996) resilience is a situation where certain qualities in an individual or the environment give a person the ability to deal with risks, thriving despite the hazard even when the individual's development is affected. Children may indeed develop resilience according to the above definition. However, whereas the parent's see the trading activities as positively helping them to develop, for the children their focus is more on pleasing their parents. Children accept the various challenges of trading, even though these challenges may be putting them at risk and even though they may be tired or sick. However, from the child's point of view, they are motivated by a sense of responsibility or obligation. Even with the various challenges that may put children who trade at risk during this activity, the children accept the situation and continue to trade despite the risks involved. It appears, however, that the children do not construe such behaviour as being resilient, even when they are tired and continue to trade; rather, they seem to view it as a form of responsibility or obligation.

Hetherington and Blechman (1996) argued that the core elements of resilience are skills, communication, coping strategy, competence in solving problems and being able to behave in a responsible manner. For these qualities to be achieved by the children, parents appear to expect that their children will need to be obedient and respectful to them whether they are right or not. Parents and social workers suggest that children move through a shifting process, transiting from trading within the market environment, which is relatively safe, into the street. They then become involved in different levels of economic activity which bring with them various risks associated, even though this is not reflected among the children in this study. The study shows that children's participation in trading provides funds needed to cover their basic educational needs.

6.3 UNDERSTANDING DECISION-MAKING IN RELATION TO CULTURAL VALUES

To understand the decision-making process of parents regarding child trading, their cultural values need to be considered within the complex environment that influences such decisions.

Nigeria, as a country with multiple languages and an array of ethnic groups, with diverse cultures but common cultural values, presents complex challenges for children (Agbo, 2014). These are unique to the children's geographical region, religious affiliations, economic status and family background. It is suggested that trading by children is an epidemic that will be difficult to eradicate due to the multiple factors which lie behind the decisions made by parents (FOS, 2002; Robson, 2004; Hunte, 2009; Hilson, 2012; Krauss, 2013). Such factors among others include gender inequality.

6.3.1 Patriarchy and Parental Negotiation in Child Trading

One major finding from this research relates to how the decision about child trading can be seen in the context of the construction of gender roles. Gender is one factor among others that contributes to the decision to send children to trade. The way in which gender operates can be complex in different settings and intersects/interacts with factors such as class and cultural values. Yeganeh and May (2011) explained gender as a social and ideological construct rather than a biological fact. They argued that gender roles are not dependent on male and female biological differences, but on the social, cultural and historical processes in the society, which affect the way gender roles are shared and how decisions are made within the society. Although the relevance of mothers being responsible for taking decisions on their children's trading activity is highly significant in the family, the decision is often possible only within a patriarchal set up whereby it has to be approved by the man, who is the head of the household. Participants agreed that it is more common for mothers to send their children to trade than fathers and emphasised that this can be achievable only with the consent and support from fathers. They explained that children appeared to be more obedient and respectful to their fathers than mothers. While fathers may not directly be involved in sending their children to trade, mothers are encouraged to send their children to trade by the complacent attitude of fathers on trading activity. This could be either an interactive or silent attitude that supports mothers' decision. Parent participants argued that when children are perceived to refuse trading, mothers tend to inform their spouse (husbands/men) who intervene by convincing the children (either by prompting or authorising) to assist their mothers. Interestingly, some of these children confirmed that when they felt tired and refused to trade for their mother, and their father intervened, they were immediately prompted to assist them. This indicates a negotiated system of parenting within the family as mothers sometimes sought support from

their children's father before their children can accept to trade. This is quite intriguing because there is a general perception that African communities often perceive women to be powerless and voiceless in decision-making (amidst the men), in matters that affect their children (Ibrahim, Talib, Paim, and Gill, 2015). However, in this case, while the women do send their children to trade, it is only when the children refused to trade that the women sought the support of their spouses/husbands. This indicates a hierarchy of power where women have authority to some extent and utilise the authority, but when it is challenged, they call upon the more respected male power for support. This appears to reflect their place in a patriarchal system, where young people are less powerful than old and women less powerful than men, but far less circumscribed in child trading related decisions in the household. This could be useful in addressing child labour challenges within the household.

Literature revealed that in the African family structure, women seek consent from the household heads (husbands/men) before decisions that concern the family are taken by them (Ibrahim et al., 2015). This is in line with the patriarchal family system that is common among African nations, including Nigeria, where the men have authority over the affairs of the household and their decisions are respected and obeyed by their children and to some degree their wives (Ibrahim et al., 2015). The cultural values of obedience and respect, therefore, play a major role in shaping the decision-making process of parents but this is linked closely to the gender of the person who sends the child to trade within that family (Chirozva, Mubaya, and Mkamuri, 2007). There are number of factors that fit into this complex picture influencing the decision to send children to trade. These factors include gender. However, there has been a dearth of information on the influence of gender on child trading. The study revealed a gender impact on child trading, especially from the women, as only they are involved in the trading activity that children do, although often supported by their spouse.

Another major gender influence on child trading that emerged from the study was the traditional authority men have in deciding the number of children their women/wives should have. This often determines the number of children in the household as this decision is determined by the gender of the children, especially if they are all or mostly females. Succumbing to such pressure can result in women having more children than the family is economically able to support, which in turn can influence the decision of parents to send their children to trade. While parents and social workers emphasised that the man and the woman

may come to agreement on the number of children they should have, the decision to have a certain number of children implicitly depends more on the woman (if she allows it), as pressure from the husband and family members can affect any agreement that has been made. Social work participants acknowledged that the number of children in a family is determined by the gender of the children which, in turn, can influence the decision for children to be sent out to trade as the household increases. Some of the parents acknowledged that when women decide to have fewer children, despite the agreement reached with their husbands, it is because of the need to give adequate care to their children. When women are unable to provide adequate care and maintenance to the family in the absence of their husbands' financial provision, and their own inability to meet the needs of the household, their children are then sent to trade. Not being able to meet the needs of the household is often as a result of the socio-economic status of the women.

Similarly, a child's gender is also culturally important in determining the prevalence of trading in the community under study. Although cultural values and traditions are changing with the advent of the global village (Chirozva, Mubaya, and Mukamuri, 2007), in most African societies where patrilineage sustains the family name and heritage, male children are important. Participants agreed that when women are unable to have male children, they are relegated to the background. This discussion was most common among social workers, who stressed that an increased number of children in a household results from seeking male children which in the process can affect the socio-economic conditions of the household. This can encourage parents to take the decision to send their children to trade.

All participants clearly agreed that mothers were more involved in their children's daily participation in trading, because the women succumb to economic and cultural pressures from the family. They support Hashim and Thorsen (2011), who argued that when their husbands are unable to meet the financial needs, women most often devise a means of sustaining the family by sending their children to trade. This also aligns with other studies which state that having a large family contributes to the increased participation of children in child labour/trading (Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2006; Basu and Van, 2008; Omokhodion and Uchendu, 2010; Munalula, 2012). Indeed, Siddiqi and Patrinos (1995) argued that a likely

reason parents in developing countries have a large family is because the children can be valuable in contributing to the household economy.

Much of the focus in the literature on child labour has been on the statistics of male children to female (88 million and 64 million respectively) who participate in child labour and its prevalence and proportion in the different regions of the world (UNICEF, 2017). Very few studies have explored parents' gender as a contributor or influence in the decision to send children to trade. This study has indicated that women are more involved in sending their children to trade than are men, which suggests that there should be more studies centred on parental (especially mothers') influence on child trading. Another factor here in relation to gender and trading is the bride price or dowry payments discussed among the focus group participants.

The payment of the bride price (also known as the dowry) during marriage (Quisumbing and Hallman, 2005; Roy, 2015) is deemed an important consideration in the context of gender inequality within the Nigerian community. Participants argued that men's perceptions about payments made by the man's family to the woman's provides the opportunity and a privileged position from which to demonstrate their authority over the women. They said that men saw the women as indebted to them and therefore obligated to them to do what they say. Most of the parent participants acknowledged that men/husbands treat their women/wives with the same power and authority they also use on their children and this can impact on the women's decisions and power in the household. Parents in the study (who were all mothers) maintained that this male dominance renders them voiceless and unable to challenge the men when they (the men) cannot meet their financial obligations to their family. The women take the responsibility of meeting those financial needs and this influences their decision to send their children to trade.

Social workers acknowledged the importance of male children in the family and that they are preferred as they prolong the family name. The pressure to have male children may lead to an increase in the total number of children in the household, which can affect the socio-economic status of the household, as the family continues to struggle to meet their economic needs. Parents and social workers agreed that families and communities view women that have all or more female children as a disappointment to the family, which can affect the children as they

grow. An example is that when girls get married, it is culturally accepted that they lose their rights and position in their biological family (Ebigbo 1996). The fear of losing a hold on one's matrimonial home is the greatest threat that women face in the society (Chirozva, Mubaya, and Mukamuri, 2007), especially when it involves the issue of procreation. It is quite interesting that women are construed as responsible for any lack of male children in the family, when in fact the birth of any child, whether male or female, is dependent on the man and not the woman. The valuing of male children rather than female by most African communities due to patriarchy agrees with some researchers' views (Ebigbo, 1996; Munalula, 2012; Umar, 2010; Ibrahim et al., 2015). Therefore, when a household become large in the quest for male children, the family can be economically affected, and this can lead to parents looking for cultural reasons to send their children to trade.

6.3.2 Parental Attitudes towards Child Trading

Although gender inequality can be linked to parental attitudes towards trading, parents' perception of the benefit of trading can influence their decision to send their children to trade. Participants recognised that children are expected to have positive behaviour (like hard work and self-determination) that replicates their parents' behaviour when they were young. This is expected to help the children to develop into responsible adults. Child trading might be perceived as child work by parents, as child trading is considered by parents as part of the family business, which it is not (Edo State Child Rights Law, 2003) and parents are unable to distinguish child work from child labour, since they are unaware of what constitutes child labour and the regulations guarding against it.

Parent participants argued that some mothers exhibit negative attitudes that influence the decisions to send their children to trade. They argued that while the success of the children is often ascribed to the children's father, mothers are blamed by families and the community when the children are not given the care, maintenance and moral education required for them to become responsible and successful adults. To avoid the blame factor, parents said that mothers take responsibility for providing for the children, by sending their children to trade when fathers are unable to provide those financial necessities.

Although literature suggests that trading activities do affect children, participants in this study revealed that children believe that it is their responsibility and obligation to provide for the family when they are in financial need. Parents argued that negotiating this economic activity may be advantageous to the children but, at the same time, social workers argued, it can also endanger their lives as they are not given the freedom to make choices. However, the danger is not about choice making, rather it is the circumstances the children find themselves in when they have no choice. This affects their success at school, becoming involved in crime (boys) or becoming sexually active too soon (girls) and not being able to escape the cultural cycle that condemns current and future generations to a life of poverty.

6.3.3 Decision-Making by Children

It emerges from the data that children are not given the opportunity to make choices on what they want or what they do not want, as parents take decisions about issues that concern their children without seeking the opinion of the children. As referred to by participants, expectations abound that part of a child's responsibility is to accept decisions taken for them by their parents/family. The cultural norms of obeying and respecting parents and other adult family members weigh on children at the expense of their freedom to make choices. This was revealed when participants argued that parents play the role of choice making for their children. This supports the concerns raised by Omokhodion and Uchendu (2010), regarding how most of the parents believed that their children should work, and how the choice was made by the parents without any consultation with or consent from the children.

The majority of the child participants expressed their inability to voice their opinions on matters that concern them. The children referred to generally accepting their conditions especially in the context of trading, whether favourable to them or not, knowing that they have no opportunity to express themselves as they are expected to be obedient to their parents. There are nuances in this data which revealed that children's strategy of coping with the task of trading was one of being resilient, accepting and enduring, as discussed previously. The children are therefore not able to express their rights as those rights are relegated by their parents.

Another nuance in the data shows another factor that contributes to child trading as being the loss of one of the parents, particularly the children's father who is acknowledged as the head of the family or household. Although this is scarcely mentioned by participants (except for one parent and a social worker), it is worth discussing because literature has revealed the loss of the family head as one of the reasons for children's participation in child labour (Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2006).

6.3.4 Loss of the Family Head

When a woman is left with several children after the death of her husband and she has no means of giving adequate care and maintenance to them, she will have no choice but to find ways to care for her children. This may motivate her to send her children to trade. Both social workers and parents argued that most mothers have no choice but to send their children to trade as they are unable to cope alone. This finding supports child labour literature which highlights the loss of the household or family head as the reason for most women sending their children to trade (Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2006; Omokhodion and Uchendu, 2010). Some participants explained that some women give their children to be cared for by relations or extended family members because the women are not able to cope with all their children after their husbands' death. This conforms to the cultural norms of collective responsibility within the Nigerian family structure, which pave the way for such decisions (Ike and Twumasi-Ankrah, 1999; Inyang and Ebirien, 2015). However, this does not reduce child trading as some of these extended family members through the norm of collective responsibility are often encouraged to send the children to trade.

Findings revealed that some of the people responsible for sending children to trade are extended family members and relations, for example grandmothers. As mentioned above, parents often give their children to such relations for care. However, children are sent to trade by these relatives without the parents' or children's consent. This finding supports some authors who argued that when most children that are given out to relatives, especially extended family members for care, it is often as a result of a loss or separation (Hunte and Hozyainova, 2008, Kantor and Hozyainova, 2008; Sim and Hoiland-Carlsen, 2008; Umar, 2012). Such children are expected to assist the extended family members that they live with.

Another explanation for decision-making that can lead to child trading relates to when there is economic deprivation and unemployment within the household or community. When one or both parents are unemployed and there is poverty within the household, women take the decision to send their children to trade. The next section discusses unemployment and poverty as a determinant of child labour.

6.3.5 Unemployment and Poverty

Unemployment can result in poverty that can affect the economic status of the family. This is because trading activity appears to be dynamic and continues to be a challenge within the household. Parent participants argued that there would be less participation of children in trading if the children's parents were employed. The employment of parents in a viable job was described as an opportunity to remove children from trading activity. Findings revealed that at least one parent from most families that send their children to trade is unemployed and participants reported that families are most affected when the head of the household has no work. Arguably, some parents believe that men who are consistently unable to provide for their family are not willing to work.

Some researchers have argued that for child labour to be reduced to its barest minimum, the socio-economic conditions of the household need to be considered (Basu and Van, 1998; Canagarajah and Nielsen, 2001; Edmonds and Pavcnik, 2005; Edmonds, 2005). Although socio-economic conditions have often been addressed through poverty alleviation programmes that have been utilised by different developing nations, including Nigeria, this has not helped in reducing the high rate of child labourers in developing countries. It is possible that the implementation process has not been viable enough to have a positive impact on the reduction of child labourers. Findings from this study revealed that cultural values influence parents' decision-making process and these values are most often held and utilised by the lower-class parents to send their children out to work. This is in agreement with other researchers, for example Delap (2001) who argued that for child labour to be reduced or eradicated, one must look beyond socio-economic conditions like poverty which is as a result of unemployment and low income, and source a solution through other means such as changing the socio-cultural conditions or factors. However, there is no guarantee that this could reduce child labour to its barest minimum or completely eradicate it, as efforts have been made towards reducing

poverty and creating employment (Togunde and Carter, 2006; Omokhodion and Uchendu, 2010). This needs to be complemented by other viable initiatives.

In a similar study Ashimolowo, Aromolaran, and Inegbedion (2010) explained that children's participation in trading activity supplements the low income of the household. For parents who are self-employed, for example artisans, the researchers argued that they are affected by lack of public amenities (e.g. electricity) which hinders them from functioning adequately and this impacts on the financial conditions of the family, which can lead to children engaging in economic activities that include trading. These economic activities are most common among the lower-class children due to financial deprivation within the household.

Additionally, some social work participants agreed that a large family with many children in the household is appreciated when a parent is unemployed as the decision can be taken for some of the children to be sent to trade. When income available in the household is not enough for both mother and children to trade, mothers are perceived to use the meagre funds at their disposal to buy wares for their children to sell while they stay at home (Umar, 2010). When children are involved in trading especially on their own, as opposed to trading alongside their parents, this may have a negative effect on their lives. This negative effect will be discussed in the next section.

6.4 THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRADING

Nigeria is a country that prioritises education and has made primary and secondary education free and compulsory for every Nigerian child, as documented in the Nigerian constitution. Therefore, children do not have the option of not attending school. By impressing upon them the advantages of school attendance as outweighing the disadvantages in terms of trading, children may be more inclined to appreciate education (Morrow and Pell, 2012). When children participate in trading activities, they are at risk of a range of negative outcomes. Wider literature suggests that trading can endanger the lives of children mentally, physically, emotionally and psychologically.

6.4.1 Inadequate Education

Parent participants acknowledged that absenteeism and/or lateness to school are some of the effects of trading by children that can cause inadequate education. Participants claimed that their children attended school regularly, but that some arrived late or missed a whole day, putting them at risk of falling behind and being unable to catch up with their lessons. This supports previous research which has highlighted the effect labour activities have on children's education (Omokhodion, 2015). It is possible that children might be less involved in trading if parents were aware of the value of adequate education for them.

Social work participants acknowledged that the government provides free education to relieve parents of educational expenses. However, some parents argued that because they still have to provide other educational materials, which are often more expensive than the 'free' tuition fee, they have to send their children to trade for economic support. They further argued that this has affected the children's school attendance and performance. Most parents complained about being faced with the financial burden of providing other additional school materials for their children, despite the government's claim of free education. Similar to previous research by Hilson (2012) on child labour in small-scale mining communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, the findings suggest that parents view the cost of buying writing and reading materials and other additional needs such as school uniforms and shoes as an additional financial burden to most African households, as most of these households are of lower-class status. This could influence parents in their decision to send their children to trade. Social work participants suggest that government support should be made available through the provision of loans to parents to boost their businesses and also help mothers to start their own businesses. The participants believe that this would reduce children's involvement in trading activity as parents would be able to care for their children and gradually pay off the loan at a low interest rate. This agrees with Hilson's (2012) views about achieving adequate education through the provision of social security that meets the needs of the family, especially the children, as a viable step to be considered. This is because though the government talk about the 'free education policy', when it is not actually free. The need for parents to provide other additional educational materials that their children require means the children have to trade to be able to function well at school.

Social workers cited children spending more time on trading than attending school, which has negative impact on the children as they are deprived of their rights to adequate education, leisure and play, thus contradicting the Nigerian adoption and signatory to CRC and ACRWC in protecting the rights of the child. There is a common agreement among the social work participants about parents being less informed and so ignorant of their children's rights, which thus affects their decisions in sending their children to trade. This is reminiscent of Omokhodion and Uchendu's (2010) study of the determinants of child labour where parents are uninformed of the rights of their children because of the parents' own level of education. There is the need to involve parents in the dissemination of information about and raising awareness of their children's rights as this is significant in addressing the challenges of child labour/trading.

Although literature suggests that in the absence of adequate school attendance, children could easily drop out of school, not much was discussed about this as all the children in my study attend school alongside trading. However, the study indicates that children could easily drop out of school when they become affected by the trading activity that they do. For example, one of the parents (PP3) acknowledged that her daughter became pregnant while she was trading and this led to the child's inability to complete her secondary education. Many other studies in a range of countries found the same outcomes for children who drop out of school and suggested different ways government can intervene (Neri and Thomas, 2001; Moyi, 2011). Additionally, Nafees, Khan, Fatmi, and Aslam (2012) in their study of children's perception of child labour in Karachi confirmed that providing children with evening lessons and educational ability are the best practices for intervention. This structural solution could be one of various means of addressing child trading in Nigeria. Other researchers referred to the awareness of the child rights in relation to education, leisure and play. Maintaining these rights could lead to lower participation of children in labour activities, including trading (Casares, 2009; Bequele, 2010; Smith, 2011). However, children's continued involvement in trading could deprive them of their rights to adequate education. This may be due to, inter alia, unchecked obstructions from their parents. This will be discussed in the next sub-section.

6.4.2 Obstruction of Children's Rights

Social workers acknowledged that there are unchecked obstructions that include lack of parental awareness of children's rights, parents' perception of their own rights against the child's rights and family businesses as some of the obstructions of rights experienced by children who are in labour. Social work participants argued that the cultural values of respect and obedience are often utilised by parents to make their children feel obliged towards them in meeting their financial needs. They acknowledged that when there are no checks and balances on the issues of children, parents can exploit them through the trading activity that they do. They further acknowledged that when there are no boundaries or restrictions and barriers are not checked, this can deprive a child from attending school.

Evidence from this study showed that unchecked obstruction during trading can put children at risk of serious dangers such as rape, drug addiction and other health hazards. This was highlighted by all social work participants and a number of parents. Findings from discussions with social workers further revealed that child trading often leads to children living on the street which, in turn, ultimately leads on to other levels of informal and illegal occupations. This is similar to the study of street children as a core element of child abuse and child labour in Nigeria where Ebigbo (2003) argued that ignorance and poverty contribute significantly to children's involvement in street trading and also to some children living permanently on the street. Similarly, Okpukpara and Odurukwe (2006) in their study of the incidence and the determinants of child labour in Nigeria proposed that the incidence of trading and idleness is higher in northern Nigeria, while child enrolment in schools is higher in southern Nigeria. Indeed, Okpukpara and Odurukwe (2006) further argued that the low numbers of children that attend school and have low enrolment categories are assumed to be from the least educated parents as compared to parents who are highly educated.

Looking at poverty alone, does not explain comprehensively the causes of child trading as some poor families do not resort to sending their children to trade. However, because of the the cultural values of respect and obedience, the children are obligated to trade if their parents wish it. This can force children into more risky situations because of the way trading can degenerate into other more risky forms of economic activity. I identify this transition which

some of the parents and social workers point to, as the ‘shift’ process which is discussed below.

6.4.3 The ‘Shift’ Process in Child Trading

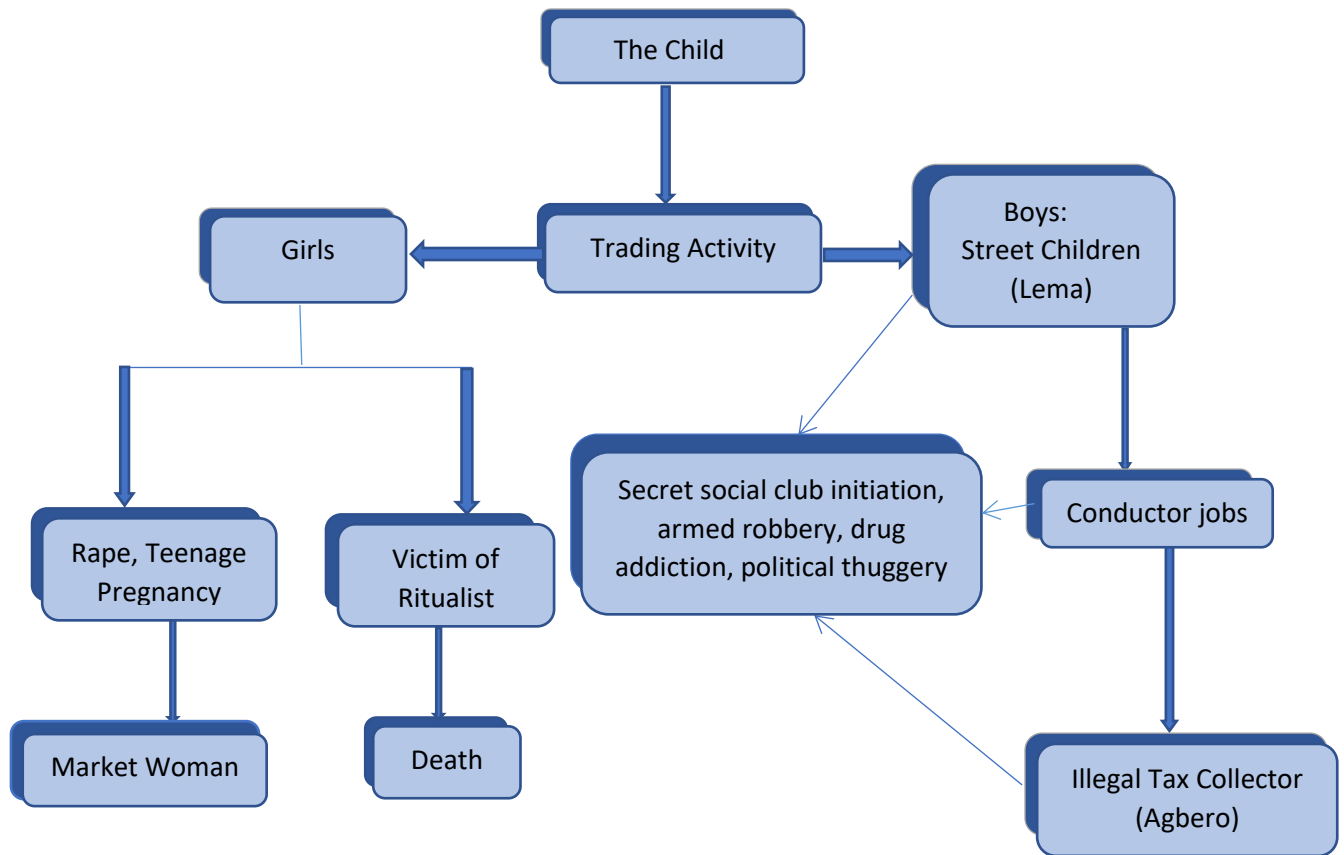
There are significant discussions by parents and social workers in the findings which reveal child trading as often going through a shift process from one labour activity to another; and involving different stages of activity and different places in the market space, and that this appears to be more common among young boys than girls. This was something that the parents in particular were concerned about. However, although parents in the study use this narrative, showing that they are aware of the danger of trading, but they do not see the danger as applying to their own children when they send them to trade. One contribution of this study is to explore some of the tensions between what parents feel might happen to their children and the kind of actual risk that is involved in the activity. In the data the parents did not see sending their own children to trade as a risk; rather, it is seen as risk when it involves other parents and their children. This risk is seen as happening to other parents and their children and not to themselves. The perception by parents of the outcome when children are sent to trade, may dissuade parents from sending their children, if parents can be made conscious of such dangers in their children’s lives when they are sent to trade.

The shift process also illustrates how values around children are being shaped by the professionals (social workers) who work with parents and children. This reflects the social workers’ discourse about the dangers that children encounter as they navigate to other occupational activities from trading. The model illustrates the perception of social workers and parents on the common outcomes of children who are involved in trading activities as many of the children are prone to encountering the dangers discussed by the social workers. The shift process therefore conceptualises the discourse social workers have about child trading.

Parents and social work participants explained that boys often move from trading to other businesses within the market. One of the foremost occupational stages that children transfer to, according to the participants, is that of becoming a street child, which is locally referred to as ‘lema’. The diagram below illustrates how children navigate their way through different

stages of work starting from the trading activity that they do. This is a narrative from parents and social work participants.

Figure 7: The Shift Process in Child Trading



As the diagram above illustrates within this discourse, most children are faced with multiple negative challenges during trading, even though this did not happen to the children in my sample. These challenges could endanger the lives of the children, especially girls as they are susceptible to rape, teenage pregnancy and becoming victims of ritualists, all of which can disrupt their school attendance. Parents and social work participants expressed these factors as commonly occurring among children who are involved in trading/child labour, even though this is not reflected in the findings in my research. Previous research similar to this perception is by Ebigbo (2003) and Omokhodion and Uchendu (2009) who argued that girls are often vulnerable to different dangers in the street when they trade. Ebigbo (2003), in his study of

female hawkers in Nigeria, referred to more than half of the girls involved in trading activities being either raped or enticed into sexual activities that are compromising and which may psychologically and emotionally destroy them. Although none of the dangers are desirable, it is possible that the most unbearable of all involves girls who become victims of 'ritualists'. Most of the parents and social workers revealed that many girls fall into the hands of ritualists who cut some parts of the girls' bodies for money making. Such parts include breasts, hair from the private parts and arm pits, finger and toe nails, and this usually results in the death of the girls. The perspective of some of the participants in this study suggests that when teenage girls become pregnant through rape or sexual exploitation, it affects their attendance in school and some often end up becoming permanent traders, so that they can fend for themselves and their child(ren).

Most of the parents and social work participants also referred to the negative effects of trading on young boys whose lives can become endangered in the process of trading. Suggested criminal activities that could impact their lives negatively include armed robbery, drug addiction, cultism and political thuggery. Participants reported that such activities were more prominent among male children who migrate to the street and become unmonitored street children locally referred to as 'lema'. Eventually, the children become independent in the street. The International Labour Organisation (2012) reported that while some may maintain tenuous relationships with their families by visiting them occasionally, others completely cut themselves off from their previous lives. Such children regard the streets as their homes, and shelter, food and companionship are sought in that environment (Ibrahim et al., 2012).

There is a gap in research around the journey that children take from being child traders within the market space to becoming street children as they negotiate their way to survive the harsh reality of the street while they move towards adulthood. However, within this study it has not been possible to demonstrate whether this is a common journey because it was not a discourse from the reality of the children studied. Participants stated that young boys who become street children (lema) are initiated into different kinds of secret social clubs found on the street, where they are introduced into violent behaviour as a strategy to achieve their desired needs in the community. Through this process of violent behaviour street children are introduced to

further and more serious activities where they are taught to be illegal tax collectors within the market environment.

Participants said that illegal tax collectors and sometimes street children who have had years of experience within the community are known locally as ‘agberos’. They explained that these young children grow up to become adults with families and earn their living through violent means of extorting money from the ordinary citizens, (both children and adults), who trade in the market. Participants acknowledged that such a job gradually becomes viewed by the community as a legitimate occupation within the market environment, where some achieve recognition within the community and are given political positions, traditional titles and even become youth leaders. Most participants argued that those illegal tax collectors whose jobs are gradually perceived as legitimate are even accepted by government officials. This is because some part of the money collected from the children and women that trade in the market during school hours is returned to the tax office in the government department. Participants said that this can be achieved through the use of selected government officials as middle men who receive the money collected by the ‘agberos’ and in turn the money is transferred to the government tax office.

Participants explained that in the process of trading in an unfriendly environment, prior to the children becoming illegal tax collectors (agberos), they are first introduced into ‘conductor’ jobs in the market, encouraged by their peers who convince them that they will earn more if they work as conductors. Most adult participants (parents and social workers) reported that the job of conductor demands an early start. They explained that since most parents are not aware that their children are involved in this activity and often would not approve because children have to leave home in the early hours of the morning (between 4:00 am and 5:00 am), the children often resort to sleeping in the streets and gradually become street children (lema). Social workers pointed out that this gives the children much independence as their movements are no longer monitored by parents. Some parents suggested that such children have social interaction with other peers of the same age group or older who encourage them to join their cult group just as they have been encouraged into the conductor business. Emphasis is on boys being recruited into any of the cult groups available, where they have more opportunity to occupy a position of power. This is expected to aid the boys’ promotion to the position of tax collector. Social workers claimed that this may have an immediate effect on the children, who

may gradually stop attending school. However, both the parents and social work participants agreed that, because of the lack of employment among the youths who have graduated from school as compared to these children who become employed through illegal tax collection work, parents often question the relevance of compulsory education. Illegal tax collectors often do not complete their secondary education as they become fully involved in the job.

Parents and social workers stated that as well as giving out tickets to children and adults that trade in the market environment, recruited young boys are employed by politicians to serve as bodyguards and thugs, especially when the politicians are desperately vying for a political position. The participants agreed that growing into this negative profession takes time, as children progress from a children's cult, to an adolescent cult, then to an adult cult where they are initiated at each level and most often go on to be exploited by politicians. These narratives from participants suggest a society where government is based on an unstructured system of leadership and where established policies are neither implemented nor utilised.

Social work and parent participants argued that the children that shift from trading to different types of illegal occupation within the community are assumed to be responsible for the illegal collection of taxes from children who trade during school hours. A series of crimes that occur across the community is said to be perpetrated by these individuals. Although, participants have also argued that some of these street children negotiate their way through this illegal tax collection (agbero) profession and become successfully recognised individuals in the society, these are not reflected in this study as the child participants are still trade within the market space. Participants argued that some parents refer to some of these successful individuals as very hard-working and encourage their children to emulate such personalities. This suggests that success through criminal or immoral means is considered by some to be better than no success at all. According to the participants, this set of individuals appears to be very successful in their choice of profession compared to the average educated individuals who are unemployed and struggling economically. Thus, the data indicates that unemployment or the lack of ready jobs among educated individuals in the community may contribute to street children becoming illegal tax collectors (agberos).

However, it is really striking how parents and social workers' discourse about how children navigates their journey from trading to different levels of work affect the children, even though it is not reflected among the children in this study.

6.5 RIGHTS VERSUS WELFARE APPROACH IN RELATION TO CULTURAL VALUES

Another key finding in this study is in the context of cultural values in relation to the rights of children and welfare. Findings suggest that parents are unaware of the three core principles of the child rights that are emphasised in the overall welfare and rights of the child. These three core principles: the provision of rights of children, protection rights and participation rights are divided into 54 articles in the 1989 UNCRC (Smith, 2011). These are also summarised into four principles in the ACRWC. The understanding of child rights and parents' and children's degree of awareness of such rights in relation to the three core principles is discussed below.

6.5.1 The Provision Rights

Arguably most parents are not cognisant of the rights of their children in terms of providing for their needs. The provision rights (by parents) which include the right to health, education, social security, physical care and play, are unknown to many parents. However, findings revealed that children's participation in trading activity deprives them of adequate education which often results in the children's inability to attend school regularly as expected. These findings are similar to those of researchers such as Neri and Thomas (2001), Moyi, (2011), Nafees, Khan, Fatmi, and Aslam (2012), who have argued that inadequate education can produce negative outcomes. Most children are therefore deprived of their rights to education when they are unable to attend school adequately due to frequent lateness or absenteeism from school. This can have a huge negative impact on the lives of children in relation to the extent to which education is valued by both parents and children.

Although parents may send children to school possibly in the best interest of the children, as school attendance is made compulsory by the government, but parents appeared to be doing it not because they view it as their children's right, but rather constructed as part of their duty as

parents. Parents do not frame education as a matter of children's rights, rather importance is placed on education from the perception that it is necessary that they allow their children to attend school, especially as none of them (parents) went beyond secondary education. This construction about education is also linked to the children's wellbeing as parents do not rationalised their children's wellbeing as a right.

6.5.1.1 School Attendance and Child Rights

Children have often had their awareness about their rights raised through the distribution of the simplified version of the child rights, in different schools. This means, in theory, they are also able to defend those rights. The Nigerian government uses education as a preventive measure in child care, where children have the rights to education and the education is made compulsory for every child through the free education scheme provided for primary and secondary schools (Akwara, Soyibo, and Agba, 2010). This is to discourage children from trading. Most of the children and parent participants talked about other financial commitments attached to the free education provided by the government, which parents need to meet, for their children to attend school and settle in class. These include uniforms and reading and writing materials. Parent participants further reported that the financial commitments over and above the tuition fees are mostly higher than the fees themselves which the government is responsible for. This finding supports other literature on child labour and school attendance (Okyere 2012; Hilson, 2012). In their separate studies Okyere (2012) and Hilson (2012) concluded that parents' inability to provide adequately for their children results in the children being involved in labour activities in order to provide for their education and to contribute to the household. The awareness that children may only be able to attend school if they are involved in labour activity was emphasised. Although some parent participants suggested that trading can teach children to be hard-working, responsible, independent and that it strengthens their personality, other parents and social work participants contended that it is possible for these qualities to be eroded and the lives of the children endangered when they trade. This study agrees with Habashi, Wright and Hathcoat (2012) when they stressed that children's rights are in the context of the protection premise of the UNCRC, which is related to, inter alia, freedom from exploitation from child labour. They explained that most countries lack the accountability to ensure and protect basic human needs which can prevent children from

expanding their capacity to enjoy a long life, attain a decent living standard and gain access to knowledge.

However, in the context of child trading, social workers argued that government is mostly concerned about children trading during school hours and tries to discourage such actions by raiding the markets during that period. They emphasised that children caught in the act of trading in the market at such specific times are arrested, and are sometimes rehabilitated. They claimed that government uses the opportunity at this period to sensitise the children and their parents to the need to prioritise school attendance over child trading so that the children can be empowered academically and find good employment when they are of age. Yet this perception seems to be a complex dilemma because as government attempts to prioritise education and employment without providing adequate means of implementing the child rights, some parents have argued that children who grow to become illegal tax collectors (agberos) are more successful and influential than the highly educated and qualified graduates who are unable to get jobs. It is possible that being educated and unemployed can have a negative impact on the reduction or eradication of child trading in the community because as participants indicate, some parents tend to refer to successful individuals among these illegal tax collectors (agberos) to justify the decisions they take in sending their children to trade. Justifying their decisions suggest that parents may not be aware of the protection rights of children against any activity that could endanger children's lives, as they tend to see a child growing to become a 'successful' individual as important rather than the child's rights. The construction of success therefore overrides the children's protection rights.

Social work participants also acknowledged government awareness of the cultural norms of the community where children's assistance to their parents is prioritised, especially within a family business. This minimises the extent to which children or their parents are reprimanded. As extensively discussed by the participants, monitoring is carried out to arrest children who are caught trading during school hours, and the children are taken by the government officials represented by police officers, to their office. But protocols are not followed in the monitoring process due to bribery and corruption among the officials. However, there is a dearth of literature on bribery and/or corruption being an obstruction in the implementation of policies

on child labour. This is a gap in the literature on child labour and this subject may need researching in the future.

6.5.1.2 Social Security

According to Dekker (2003) children are expected to be provided with both formal and informal social security. Most African children are dependent on the latter (Dekker, 2005). Informal social security is support that is provided through kinship, family and the community while formal social security is support that is provided by the government to help with the economy (financial and material) of the family (Dekker, 2003). There is a widespread sensitisation about the rights of the child which is accessible to children, but the parents, who are the agency for the decision-making on whether a child will trade or not are not sensitised adequately enough for it to be a deterrent and change their decisions. Children's lives can be negatively impacted if their rights to security are not well protected. Therefore, the interest of every child should be paramount when decisions are being made in terms of the children's trading activities. In meeting this interest, social workers argued that the social security of every child needs to be met in order to reduce the rate at which children are exploitatively used for economic purposes.

Most of the participants (children, parents and social workers) argued that many parents are not aware of the rights of their children and therefore the best interests of the children are not considered. Participants referred to parents being aware of their own rights and prioritising those rights over their children's due to the cultural values of child obedience, respect and assistance that are expected from the children. Social workers confirmed that sensitisation of parents on the rights of their children is yet to be thoroughly addressed. However, they are hopeful that the Nigerian government will consider it soon.

The social security, which is expected to ameliorate the extent that parents take the decision to send their children to trade, is yet to be provided by the government. Social workers argued that reducing the rate at which parents send their children to trade is challenging because the government does not provide social security to parents. The study showed that if government can provide the necessary social security, for example the provision of financial support through loans to parents, especially women, and if the conditions for repayment attached to it

are reasonable, then it will help to reduce the rate at which children are sent to trade. This is supported by the literature on the need for social security, which includes empowering women by giving out loans to mothers in support for their business (Dekker 2003).

6.5.2 The Protection Rights

The protection rights of safety from abuse, discrimination and injustice, are expected to be upheld by parents in the care and maintenance of their children. In contextualising the support for child protection, it becomes questionable if child protection is inconsistent with children's rights (Pandey and Gautam, 2015). Children are neglected by their parents and their lives are endangered when they are out trading without being monitored, which may affect them physically, emotionally and psychologically during their childhood and even extend to their adulthood. Parents' general perception that children have no rights as expressed in the data reveals that parents do not recognise their children's right to protection. Findings suggest that children are deprived of their protection rights, the right to safety from abuse, discrimination and injustice when they are sent to trade by their parents. The Edo State Child Rights Law, part 2, section 28, states that:

'No child shall be forced or subjected to child labour, or employed to work in any capacity'.

Sections 29 and 30 state:

'Hawking (trading) or begging by children is against the law'.

Social work participants emphasised that parents' ignorance of this law is one of the reasons why parents continue to send their children to trade. They referred to government inability to enforce, fully, the child rights law because of the socially constructed perception that government officials have about the cultural values of assistance that parents expect from their children. The fact that government takes sympathetic account of the cultural values of assistance that children are expected to give to their parents affects the ways in which child trading is addressed in the community. This suggests, in line with the literature, that the failure of the government in its duty to completely enforce children's rights has truncated the efforts that could have been made in implementing the law (Akwara et al., 2010). Children are also required to respect their parents and family/community elders as well as expecting to be

protected by their parents against any discriminatory cultural values or practices. However, the responsibility of being obedient to one's parents, as instructed in the ACRWC, reinforces children's inability to express themselves about the trading activity that they do. This has been criticised by Van Bueren (2009).

Additionally, as revealed in the data, parents appear to consider their own best interests above those of their children as they continue to think of the financial conditions of the household. This supports the view of Landgren (2005) that in the construct of child labour, the child's best interest is most often not considered by parents when decisions are taken to send their children to trade. For the best interests of every child to be achieved, researchers have argued that children should be given the opportunity to participate in matters that concern them. This will help the children contribute meaningfully to the issues in their lives and to proffer adequate solutions. Government should also put more effort into providing a better means of bringing awareness to parents of their children's best interests as against their (parents') own, as the parents should also be given the opportunity to contribute positively to those interests through an inclusive sensitisation process.

6.5.3 The Participation Rights

Participation right is the right of children to contribute to have a say in matters that affect their lives, whether socially, economically, culturally and/or politically (Akwara et al., 2010). The right to participate entails children's right to be heard and to be able to associate freely. This also includes the right for children to be able to access information and express themselves. If children can engage in these rights as they grow, they will be able to realise all their rights, which, in turn, will prepare them for active adult roles in society (Brunnberg, 2015). However, this seems scarcely visible in the lives of African children, as their parents tend to be in control of those rights for their own best interest.

Most of the children in this study indicate that their parents never sought their opinion or their feelings about the trading activity that they do. This is in violation of the UNCRC premise that children have rights in participating in decisions relating to issues that concern and impact on their lives (Habashi et al., 2012). Habashi et al. (2012) argued that while the protection premise assumes children to be free from being deprived of the necessities of life, which include access

to medical facilities, education, food and shelter, children's participation in decisions on issues that concern them is not always associated with the provision and the protection rights of the child. They gave an example of child labour as not being perceived as children's participation in the economy or as contribution to the welfare of the community because the activity is perceived as exploitative. Although a few of the child participants claimed to have tried showing their feelings by refusing to trade, the children argued that this was perceived by their parents as a form of disobedience and disrespectful to them, and as a result, the children were physically punished. All the child participants agreed that they are not given the choice of whether to go out to trade for their parents or not; instead the decisions are taken on their behalf by their parents. The study, therefore, has revealed that the opinions of children are relegated and not sought when decisions are taken for them. This could be one of the reasons for the shift process as the children have the belief that they are not being listened to. It is possible that parents lack the awareness of their children's right to have a say in the decision to trade, and that that may be the reason children's opinions are never sought. Some parent participants' lack of awareness is indicated in their argument that they assisted their parents when they were young, so it is expected that their children also assist them.

Additionally, all the participants agreed that children see their trading activity as an obligation that needs to be fulfilled, because it is viewed as a demonstration of being responsible, obedient and respectful children. In contrast, the study of groups of children that work in the artisanal gold mining site in Ghana suggest that while the work that some of the children do on the site may potentially be harmful to the children, the work is perceived as a means through which the children attempt to achieve access to their rights to education (Okyere, 2012). Okyere (2012) argued that it may not be in the best interest of the children to be denied the opportunity to work without consideration being given to the negative effect the denial may eventually have on them. He concludes that any intervention that seeks to end children's work at the site should also seek to address the reasons behind the children being involved in the work in the first case. Similarly, Liebel (2015) argued that mechanisms to protect the children from exploitation and abuse which enable children to work in decent conditions should be enacted. This calls for the consideration of different types of solution to the different forms of child labour found in different communities, as one specific step taken to solve one form of child labour activity cannot necessarily be used to solve another.

6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented and discussed child labour/trading. It supports and expands on relevant theories and literature relating to child trading as a socially constructed phenomenon that is built on original, contextual and a rich understanding of the socio-cultural influences on the decision-making processes of parents. Although the literature acknowledges the different perceptions of trading amongst children, parents and social workers, this study has explored and identified the differences in meanings ascribed to the trading activity that the children undertake. Some of these differences include trading being considered as part of hard work for children to become responsible adults and trading as part of financial support by children to their parents, especially mothers. While this trading activity corroborates the universal perception that child labour is a result of the socio-economic status of household, the study also recognises that socio-cultural elements influence the decision-making process of parents.

Similarly, the study acknowledges the need to consider the socio-cultural values of the community when child labour issues are being addressed, as children's perceptions of their rights and parents' understanding of the children's rights are important. This is relevant to understanding the socially constructed view about child labour held by parents as the parents need to be enlightened about the rights of their children, since currently, parents seem to think of their own best interests rather than their children's.

One major finding in this study through the narrative of both parents and social work participants is the transition from trading within the market environment to becoming street children, then progressing on to different types of informal occupation, which I referred to as the 'shift' process. This is achieved through different levels of occupational networks that can lead to criminal behaviour and illegal work, especially among the male traders. The children begin by trading within the market environment to becoming street children and move on to becoming bus conductors and finally illegal tax collectors (agberos). This is achieved through initiation into different cult groups that define the different occupations at different stages.

The chapter ended with a critical discussion of a 'right versus welfare' approach that could be utilised by the government as a way of initiating positive change to child trading. This could

be considered in a developing country such as Nigeria by providing social security to both parents and their children. When government take full responsibility for the social security of children and their parents, this will provide a means through which parents can be discouraged from using cultural values as an excuse in sending their children to trade. Chapter seven will conclude this thesis.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes this thesis by presenting this understanding of child labour in the context of child trading in Nigeria. The overall findings of the study revealed that there were other factors beyond the socio-economic status of parents that contribute to the exacerbation of child labour. Socio-cultural contributions through the decision-making process of parents were found to have a huge impact on child trading. This decision-making by parents about child trading created an occupational shift process, whereby the male children transited from trading to other areas of labour that impacted negatively on their lives as they grew to adulthood. Some of the female children through this process of trading experienced the challenge of sexual exploitation or rape and became victims of ritualists. Although findings revealed that there were legislations in place to protect children against economic labour and exploitation, the effectiveness of the legislation/law was undermined by the economic needs and cultural influence of the household.

The findings were based on three overarching research questions:

1. How have socio-cultural values influenced parents' decision-making process in sending their children to trade?
2. What effect has this trading activity had on the children?
3. How has the degree of awareness of the child rights by both children and parents impacted on child labour/trading?

The research explored the experiences of children and how the decision-making process of parents was influenced by their cultural values of respect, obedience, assistance and responsibility in the context of child trading. The study adopted an instrumental case study approach that was rooted in the philosophy of a social constructionist framework to gather information from both children and adults about child trading. Child trading presented a pathway to other employment and this was termed the 'shift process' where the original contribution to knowledge was based.

The thesis explored the views and experiences of children in relation to the trading activity that they do during and after school hours. The study extended its exploratory approach to the views of parents and social workers, which allowed for a socially constructed understanding of child trading. The study recognised the nuances in child trading and tried to capture the tensions arising from constant negotiations that take place within the family. Such tensions include, amongst others, the economic conditions of the household as a result of low income and unemployment and the debate on the number and the gender of children in the family. This allowed for a broad understanding of the everyday realities of children who were involved in trading within a market space. The socio-cultural contributions of child labour in relation to the decision-making process of parents were also investigated and the effects on the lives of children were considered. The degree of awareness of children's rights by both the children themselves and their parents were considered. The level of impact of the awareness of these rights on the children was explored. The study incorporated the different stakeholders' perspectives both on an individual basis and in groups, which allowed the emergence of a rich understanding of key concepts such as the social interactions between the children within their trading environment. Children and parents were viewed as active agents in the trading activity as children collaborated with their parents while their parents made decisions for them to trade.

The study explored how child trading was socially constructed based on socio-cultural factors that influence the decision-making process of parents. Parents' expectation that their children adhere to the cultural values of obedience, respect and assistance as against the children's rights, (on which this study's premise was built), was found to contribute to the economic exploitation of children. While parents' perception of the decision to send their children to trade may have seemed beneficial to the children and the parents themselves, however, the children's lives were often endangered when they trade. More commonly, some parents may have genuinely had the perception that their decisions were in the best interests of their children, as their children succumbed to pressures with no choice but to consent to their parents' demand. The research highlighted the lack of awareness of child rights as parents considered their own rights against the rights of their children. This in turn influenced parents' decisions in sending their children to trade while the best interests of the child are relegated. In this chapter, the limitations of the study were discussed. The implications of the findings for policies and practice were highlighted and an area for further research was suggested. I ended the thesis with a summary of the chapter.

7.2 UNDERSTANDING CHILD LABOUR/TRADING IN NIGERIA

The reviewed literature established that socio-cultural contributions of child labour were the least considered in child labour research (Okafor, 2012; Ogbujah, 2014). However, considering the multicultural ethnic groups in the community where the research was held, findings revealed that socio-cultural factors, especially cultural values in relation to the decision-making process of parents, should be considered when child labour issues are being addressed.

Despite several measures taken in combating child labour in Nigeria, it continues to remain a great challenge and concern for the country. More than ten years after the incorporation of the child rights acts in Nigerian law, little is known by children and parents about these acts and their importance. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) guaranteed the rights of every child. This was supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2006), which reported that about 25 per cent of 80 million Nigerian children under the age of 14 were estimated to be involved in child labour (Umar, 2010; Adama, 2014). Emphasis by UNCRC has always included independent nations' responsibilities in the protection of children, encouraging children's participation in issues that affect them and helping children in reaching their potential. Being pro-active with holistic approaches in addressing child labour issues may result in the best outcomes for children, parents, families and the community (Delap, 2001; Edmonds, 2005).

The literature reviewed in this study revealed that child labour/trading is a complex concept that cannot be addressed based on a one-dimensional approach such as the socio-economic status of the household, but through a multifaceted approach that includes socio-cultural perspectives such as parents being influenced by their cultural values in decision-making. Adopting the social constructivist framework was sensitive to various cultural traditions, which validate different stakeholder perspectives. It also helped to identify contradictory constructions that children and parents alike associate with different cultural traditions. The framework can be applied to all decision-making processes.

While decades of child labour study have been centred on socio-economic, demographic and socio-structural dynamics for its prevalence and incidence, less research has been conducted

on the perception of children labourers, their parents and social workers on the socio-cultural aspects of child labour (Ogbujah, 2014). Gathering data from small-scale cohorts of both children and adults can add to the socio-cultural understanding of child labour. This helped me in the understanding of the children's stories and what the parents and social workers talked about in the study.

The decision-making process of parents regarding child labour has not previously been considered in the literature on child labour. Neither had there been research on child labour using a social constructivist framework. This prompted my desire to research into this nuanced area using a case study approach in eliciting the views and understanding of children and adult stakeholders that are directly or indirectly connected to children who trade. This was to promote the awareness of child rights and to reduce or eradicate child labour.

7.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with other small-scale qualitative case studies, this research was not without its limitations. One of the limitations in this study was the inability to hold in-depth interviews and group discussions with parents who are economically disadvantaged but whose children do not trade. This approach could have further contributed to a broader understanding of child labour in the context of both the socio-economic, such as poverty, and the socio-cultural influence. While the initial recruitment included parents whose children do not trade, during the in-depth interview and the group discussions with parents it came to my knowledge that some of the parents either had children that were too young to trade, or their children had at one time or another been involved in trading activity. There were no parents who had children between the ages of 10 and 15 whose children had never been involved in child trading.

Another limitation in the study was the number of male participants. There was only one male parent participant in the study. The voice of male parents was unrepresented in this research. This was largely because few fathers engaged their children in trading activities, as parents who trade or send their children to trade in a market space were more often mothers. The study also acknowledged the inability to include a group discussion with social workers. This could have added to the understanding of the topic.

It is pertinent to state that because of the exploratory nature of the study, which limits the sample of this study to a small size as aforementioned, the population of the participants in the study cannot be generalised to a wider Nigerian markets population. All participants (with the exception of social workers) were recruited from Oba market. Including other markets could have diversified the perception of other participants from a different geographical market environment. This could have helped to develop a comprehensive understanding and gained more insight into the socio-cultural contributions of child trading.

7.4 ORIGINAL RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

This thesis makes two potential contributions to knowledge. These are theoretical and methodological contributions.

7.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study highlighted the relevance of cultural values in the decision-making process of parents, which have been less explored and identified in the research about child labour. The study identified children, parents and social workers' perceptions of how cultural values exacerbate child labour. The research showed that the decision of parents in sending their children to trade was socially constructed and influenced by the cultural values that parents hold about their children's responsibilities towards them (their parents). Findings revealed that child trading endangered the lives of children and it was also a pathway to other employment that impacted negatively on the lives of children as they grew to adulthood.

The literature on child labour had been dominant in its socio-economic contributions with less focus and discussion on other prevailing contributions such as the socio-cultural factors. In adding to knowledge in this research, a model that identified the pathway to other employment was developed. This model contributes to the understanding that trading has a shift pattern that involves different stages. This pattern is mostly utilised by the male children in meeting their daily financial needs. The male children go through a 'shift' process that introduces them into becoming street children and often results in violent behaviour as a means of livelihood in order to achieve their desired life goals. In the female aspect of the shift process, the girl child becomes vulnerable to environmental dangers, which makes her susceptible to rape and

sexual assault that could result in teenage pregnancy. The girl child may in the process drop out of school, bringing her to a lifetime job of trading in the market, which is the only job most often available for female children that are not educated. In a riskier situation, the girl child could fall into the hands of ritualists²⁸, who remove parts of her body for rituals and this could result in the death of the girl.

Another contribution to knowledge was how stakeholders understood child rights in the context of the cultural values of the people. This revealed that the rights of children were conceptualised differently by different stakeholders. While social workers acknowledged the rights of every child as stated in the UNCRC (1989) and adopted in the labour acts, children and parents were ignorant of these rights whereas the cultural values of respect and obedience were emulated and transferred across generations. This made the rights of parents supersede children's rights, with the best interest of the child relegated. The study recognised the relevance of the decisions of parents as a contributing factor in child labour.

Major contributors to child labour other than parents are also highlighted in this study. The extended family members, for example grandmothers, are identified as some of the persons who send children to trade. This has also been missing in the literature on child labour. The study also revealed that the continued participation in trading activity especially among boys can lead to an increasing shift into different types of teenage work in the community.

The findings demonstrate social workers' acknowledgement that sensitisation on the awareness of child rights is limited to children and they recognised the need to begin to look for a pathway in bringing the awareness to parents. Active dialogue on how child trading could be eradicated through sensitisation of children and parents allowed for a shared understanding of a collaborative process that could yield a positive outcome.

7.4.2 Methodological Contributions

This study makes an original contribution to knowledge through a methodological approach by being one of the first case study approaches to focus on socio-cultural contributions of

²⁸Ritualists are persons who are involved in the procurement of human parts (Igwe, 2004).

child labour in a market space, with specific sample populations of participants from the south-south region of Nigeria. The approach provided an environment for children to voice their perception of issues that concerned them. Using a social constructionist framework helped to capture all the tensions that were on display as social workers tried to address the challenges that children encountered when they trade. Social workers were able to recognise that more of their efforts in reducing or eradicating child trading were directed towards children rather than parents.

The exploratory nature of this study allowed for a rich and contextual demonstration of how cultural values influence the decision-making process of parents. Incorporating different stakeholders in the study enabled the findings to be grounded in the experiences of children and the perspectives of parents and social workers about child trading.

7.5 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

One of the primary objectives of the research was to explore the degree of awareness of the child rights by both parents and their children in addressing child labour issues.

Findings revealed that child rights were not considered in the decision-making process of parents when child labour dynamics were being addressed. Although policies were documented and recognised, implementations were disrupted as a result of government consideration of parents' cultural values. For intervention to prevail, social work practitioners need all-inclusive views when policies are being implemented. The implementation of these policies should concur with providing parents with alternative means to deter them from taking decisions to send their children to trade. This can be achieved through the provision of social security for families as practised in most developed countries. This study has highlighted the gap between children's and parents' degrees of awareness of child rights. Directing more of the sensitisation programmes towards parents by clarifying the negative impact of their parental decisions can provide a foundation for a systemic change in the family and the community. Moreover, the interest of the child should surmount the interest of parents. This can be achieved when parents are constantly informed of the long-term negative effect of their

decisions on child trading. Government should be able to address the gap between the policy in place and actual implementation of the policy.

Finally, the socio-cultural complexities of the numerous ethnic groups, traditions and cultures in Nigeria must be taken into consideration when addressing Nigeria's social problems like child trading. This could help to address the socio-cultural influence of parents' decisions to send their children to trade. It could also aid in the success of the social work profession in Nigeria, as social workers are tasked with facilitating interactive social processes among individuals, groups and communities with diverse cultures. They therefore need constant self-evaluation in an effort to keep their professional knowledge and skills current. Interventions that will encourage shared decision-making between parents and social workers will aid to tackle the cultural challenges in the community. The findings are directed towards a cultural system that is multiple and complex, which impacts on how children can cope with the realities of the challenges they experience daily as they trade. The study suggests the relevance of acknowledging these cultural realities in the community and addressing this problem through dialogues between the stakeholders. Phillips (2009) also suggested multicultural policies based on cultural understanding and emphasised recognising individuals as agents of culture and not captives, where attention should be given to obstacles discouraging people from voicing their challenges because of cultural pressures and practices. Government is therefore expected to intervene in removing the obstacles so that individuals can take informed decisions and make choices by involving communities in discussing and dialoguing on legislative and policy processes that will provide a positive outcome. This could aid in addressing socio-cultural issues that may be contributing to the challenge of child labour.

Children's overall welfare, (including their education), can be positively affected when policies geared towards addressing the challenges of child labour are considered by involving individuals, groups and communities through collaborations, negotiations and reaching consensus decisions for positive change.

7.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings in this study have identified that other areas of further research should include a collaborative study between policy makers (government) and the community. This is to

explore the perspective of wider stakeholders such as community leaders and market women leaders. This will strengthen evidence-based research that could impact as a change of action in the community. Other suggested future research is a longitudinal exploration that will include the perspectives of both children and parents from poor households who are not involved in trading. This is to explore their views on the socio-cultural values that contribute to child trading. This will give a wider understanding on child labour issues.

Further research is also suggested to explore child rights in the context of the cultural relativism in order to gain insights into how the rights of the child can be beneficial to both children and their parents. This perspective can be harnessed by social workers. Some all-inclusive research where all members of the household are informed about the rights of every child is also very necessary.

Finally, the unit of analysis in this study was one market space. Further research using multiple market spaces with the same stakeholders or even wider stakeholders would also contribute meaningfully to the scholarship of child labour reduction or eradication.

7.7 SUMMARY

This thesis has identified the relevance of exploring child labour using a social constructivist approach. This is lacking in the current literature about child trading in a market space. The thesis has further recognised the nuances in the degree of awareness of child rights especially among parents. The thesis concluded by presenting an understanding of child labour in Nigeria. The limitations of the study and the contributions to knowledge through theoretical and methodological approaches were discussed. The implication of the findings to social work policies and practice were also highlighted and finally suggestions for future research were acknowledged.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This informed consent form is for parents of children (involved in trading) participating in the research titled “Exploring Child Labour: An Examination of Child Trading in Nigeria”

Main Investigator: Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu. Research Student,
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Email: abiodun.osaiyuwu@student.anglia.ac.uk

Supervisory Team: Dr Sarah Burch and Dr Adriana Sandu

The Informed Consent Form has two parts:

1. Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
2. Certificate of Consent (for signature if you agree that your child may participate)

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

PART I: INFORMATION SHEET

About the research project

This project is ‘*Exploring Child Labour*’ and is a study looking at child trading in the Edo State, Nigeria. Your child (with your consent) is invited to take part in the study to help us better understand how cultural values contribute to parents’ decision to send their children to trade.

Purpose and value of study

This research is concerned with investigating how cultural values influence parents’ decision in sending their children to trade and how this affect the children’s lives.

Invitation to participate

We are looking for young children aged between 10-15 years who are involved in trading and (with the consent of their parents/guardians) are willing to share their views and opinions on the issues of child labour in the context of child trading. A focus group discussion involving six children will be arranged and it will last between forty-five minutes and an hour. The discussion will be scheduled

at a mutually convenient time that may be suggested by the participants and/or their parents/guardians.

Who is organising the research

My name is Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu. I am a PhD Research Student at Anglia Ruskin University, in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education. This research has gained ethical approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Panel and is being completed as part of my PhD studies.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the study will be presented in journals or at seminars to further understand the exacerbation of child labour in the context of child trading in Nigeria. A brief resume of the findings will be emailed to all participants at the end of the study.

Why do you want my child to take part?

Because your child is between 10-15 years and he/she sell

Can I refuse my child from taking part?

Your child's involvement in this project is entirely voluntary and it is your decision to allow your child to participate in this study and your child's decision to take part in the study if you consent to it. Your child has the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process.

What will happen if I agree that my child should take part?

The focus group discussion will take between forty-five minutes and an hour. The discussion will take place in the Community Hall that will be provided by the Community leader. This is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child and other children. The group discussion will start with making sure that the children are comfortable.

Questions that the children will be asked include

1. Why do you sell/trade?
2. What do you like and/or dislike about selling/trading?
3. How do you express this feeling?
4. What is the reaction of your parents/guardians when this feeling is expressed?
5. Why do you think your parents send you to trade?
6. Have you ever experienced any difficult situation while you are trading?

With your permission, I would appreciate being able to sound record the discussion.

What risks are there and what will be done to ensure my child's wellbeing?

The focus group discussion will be carried out in a respectful and cooperative manner, with everyone having the right to be heard. The discussion will take place in the Community Hall that will be provided by the Community Leader as outlined above. The discussion is planned to be an interesting experience and is not expected to have a negative impact on any one.

Why should my child take part in the research?

This research is an opportunity for your child to have a voice in research which focuses on child labour in the context of child trading. Your child's opinion will add to existing research aiming to reduce or eradicate the problems associated with child labour. Your child's involvement will give him/her opportunity to reflect on his/her personal views on the cultural values influencing your

decision to send him/her to trade which can bring a positive change or orientation to child labour and also to hear what other children have to say about them.

What will happen to information that is collected from my child?

All the data collected from the focus group discussion will be kept confidential and secure—in locked rooms, locked filing cabinets and on password protected computers. After one year, or earlier if your child withdraws from the focus group, all data and any personal information collected will be securely destroyed.

The discussion and other relevant data will be written up into a research report and will form part of my PhD thesis.

How will my child's participation in the project be kept confidential?

Confidential data will be securely stored as outlined above; your address will not be named or made easily identifiable in subsequent reports. Your child's real name will be replaced by a substitute name or symbols in all reports written about the research to protect his / her anonymity.

Contact for further information

Researcher

Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu, PhD Research Student,
Faculty of Health, Social Care & Education,
Anglia Ruskin University,
Bishop Hall Lane,
Chelmsford, CM1 1SQ
Email: abiodun.osaiyuwu@student.anglia.ac.uk

Supervisor

Dr Sarah Burch
Director of Research
Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education
Anglia Ruskin University
Young Street
Cambridge, CB 1SQ UK
Email: sarah.burch@anglia.ac.uk

PART TWO: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I have been asked to give consent for my child to participate in this research study which will involve him/her in a focus group discussion. I have read the foregoing information and had the opportunity to ask questions about it. I consent voluntarily for my child to participate in this study.

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____

Statement by the researcher

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the parent/ guardian of the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the person understands what the research is about.

I confirm that the parent/guardian was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked has been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has given the consent freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the parent/guardian of the participant.

Name of Researcher: Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



NAME OF PARTICIPANT.....

Main Investigator - Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu. Research Student,
Anglia Ruskin University, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford. CM1 1QS
Email: abiodun.osaiyuwu@student.anglia.ac.uk

Supervisory Team: Dr Sarah Burch and Dr Adriana Sandu

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand and agree to sound recordings being made of the research discussions or activities.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.
4. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to the University¹ processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print).....Signed.....Date.....

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: *Exploring Child Labour: An Examination of Child Trading in Nigeria*

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____ Date: _____

¹ "The University" includes Anglia Ruskin University and its partner colleges

APPENDIX 3: CHILD ASSENT FORM



NAME OF CHILD.....

TITLE OF PROJECT: *Exploring Child Labour: An Examination of Child Trading in Nigeria*

My name is **Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu**. I am a research student from Anglia Ruskin University, in the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education.

I am investigating child labour. I am inviting you to participate in the study to help us have a better understanding of why parents/guardians send their children to trade.

You are also invited to participate because you are a child between the age of ten years and fifteen years and you are involved in trading.

The discussion is going to involve you and some other children that also trade. You will be asked questions on what you think about parents/guardians sending their children to trade in Oba market in Benin City.

You are expected to take part so that you can contribute to the research that is on child labour as it relates to child trading.

You can choose to leave the discussion at any point you like and you don't have to give a reason why. All you have to do is to inform me that you are leaving.

All the information that is collected from the discussion will be kept secure in a locked room or a locked filing cabinet where no one can have access. It will also be kept confidential; no one will know that you participated because no real names will be used and there will be no access to the information you supplied.

Even though you are interested in participating in the study, your parents/guardians will have to give permission for you to participate in the study before you can, and if you decide not to continue with the discussion at any point, it will be okay.

My telephone number is (Home Number) You can call me if you have questions about the study or if you decide you don't want to be in the study any more.

I will give you a copy of this form in case you want to ask questions later.

Agreement

I have decided to be in the study even though I know that I don't have to do it. Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu has answered all my questions.

Signature of Child Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX 4: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



1A Salmon Parade
New Street
Chelmsford
Essex, UK
CM1 1PR

The Honourable Commissioner
Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
GRA
Benin City

ATTENTION

The Director
Child Development Department

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a research student from Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, UK. I am doing a study on how cultural values influence parents' decision in sending their children to trade in a market space in Benin City. I am seeking permission to interview four social work officers who have been staff of the department for at least two years. This is in order to discuss this issue and other issues relating to child labour and child rights in the state.

Attached is the participant information sheet detailing the research issues that will be discussed. For more information about this study, I can be reached at telephone number: 08024346510. I will be back to get response on when and where the interview can be held.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Abiodun Osaiyuwu/Anglia University student researcher

APPENDIX 5: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR SOCIAL WORKERS



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Social Workers

Dear

Invitation to take part

My name is Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu and I am a research student at Anglia Ruskin University doing a PhD degree. I am also a social worker and I have worked with children and youths in the University of Benin.

As part of my studies I will be doing some research on child trading in Oba market and I would like to invite you to take part.

To help you decide whether to participate in the research or not, it is important for you to understand why the study is being carried out and what it will involve for you. This information sheet spells out the purpose of this study and your part in it. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

You can also ask me questions if you want and my contact details can be found below.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is interested in finding out about how cultural values influence parents' decisions in sending their children to trade.

A lot of discussions have been centred on poverty, unemployment and illiteracy as the reason parents send their children to trade. There has been less discussion on the socio-cultural contributions of child labour.

We know that children contribute a lot in supporting their parents economically through trading; we are interested in knowing how cultural values influence parents in sending their children to trade.

We are also interested in how children are affected by this economic activity they do. We also want to know the extent to which parents and children are aware of the child rights laws.

Finding out more about how cultural values influence parents' decision in sending their children to trade and how this activity have affected the children will be a useful information to share with others especially you, the service providers in seeking the best interest of the child.

How will you find out what you need to know?

I will gather the information I need by carrying out individual interviews with 13 participants (4 parents, 5 children and 4 social workers).

I will also carry out three sets of group discussions with 17 participants. This will consist of 12 child participants in two groups of discussion with 6 children in each group; and 5 parent participants in the third group.

All of the information gathered will then be analysed and written up in a final report.

Why have I been invited to take part?

As a professional involved in providing support in the best interest of the child, your views are relevant to this study. By obtaining your views and the views of other colleagues with you we hope to learn more about how cultural values influence parents' decisions in sending their children to trade. The government stance about this activity and how children that are involved in this activity are affected. Positive steps that have been taken as efforts towards minimizing this trading activity that children do.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part I will ask you to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. A decision not to take part or withdrawal from the study at any time will not affect you in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?

I would like to meet with you at your office for about an hour. During this time, I will ask you some questions on the issue of child trading in the community. I will ask you your views about how cultural values influence parents' decisions in sending their children to trade.

Before the start of your interview I will ask for your consent for the interview to be audio-taped. This taped discussion will then be written up.

You will be able to take a break during the interview if you wish.

Expenses and payments:

This study is not funded; I am therefore only able to pay travelling expenses to and from the interview and offer a small token of thanks in the form of a gift voucher for every person taking part in the study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages and risks of taking part.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no intended benefits for individual participants.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about anything to do with the study, you should contact me in the first instance and I will do my best to help you.

My contact details are:

Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu

Phone No:

Email:

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. The data will be anonymised and the audio file and notes from the interview will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be stored for no longer than 18 months, after which the data will be destroyed. During this time, the data will be accessed for writing up and analysis only by me.

The only information that would not be private would be if you were to tell me anything that would lead me to think you or someone else is in immediate danger of serious harm then I would have to pass this information on to someone who might be able to help. If this should happen then I would talk to you about this first and what might happen.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I (Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu) am the researcher and I am sponsored by Anglia Ruskin University to organise and carry out this study in Oba market, Edo State, Nigeria. There is no funding for this research and I will not be receiving any payment for carrying out the study.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by Anglia Ruskin University Ethics Board and University of Benin Ethics Committee.



What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings will be written as a final report and submitted to Anglia Ruskin University. Some of the findings will also be published.

*Thank you for considering taking part and taking time to read this sheet
Please ask any questions if you need to*

Abiodun Blessing Osaiyuwu
Researcher

APPENDIX 6: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN
Child's details
Name:
Date of birth/Age:
Receipt of signed consent form parent: YES/NO
Receipt of signed consent form child/young person: YES/NO
Request to see transcript of interview: YES/NO
Question 1. Let's start by getting to know you a bit?
<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many are you in your house? • How many siblings do you have? • Do you go to school? • How often do you go? • What do you like doing? • What don't you like doing? • What do your parents do?
Question 2. How does being sent to trade make you feel as a child?
<p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been trading? • How do you feel when you go and trade for your parents
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>

- How do you express (show) this feeling?
- How does your parents feel when they see how you feel?
- What do they do?

Question 3. How have you been affected by this activity?

Prompts:

- What happened to you after what they did?
- What did you do after what happened?
- Did you complain to any one?
- What did the person say or do?

Question 4. What do you know about your right as a child?

Prompts

- Do you think you are doing the right thing when you trade?
- Why do you think your parents send you to trade?
- Do you know what the law says about trading?
- Have you ever been stopped from trading before? (e.g task force taking your wares from you by force)
- If so, how did you get your wares back?
- What did the people that seized your wares/goods do to you?
- What did your parents do?
- How do you think you can be supported?
- Do you think your parents need support?
- How do you think they can be supported?
- ***Do you have any other thing to say?***

APPENDIX 7: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS
PARENTS' PERSONAL DETAILS
Name:
Date of birth/age:
Level of Education:
Number of children:
Gender of children:
Age of children:
Receipt of signed consent form: YES/NO
Request to see transcripts of interview: YES/NO
Question 1. Introduction: Tell me about the trading that you do?
<p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you sell? • What average of time do you spend in the market daily to trade? • Does your children trade with you? • How many of them trade? • Do they trade on their own or they trade along with you? • Do they attend school? (If yes) and they also trade: • When do they attend school when they also have to trade? • How are you able to cope with trading and taking care of your children?
Question 2. Why do you send your children to trade?
<p>Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think it is right for you to send them to trade for any reason at all? • Some parents do not send their children to trade even though they are managing, why do you think they don't?

- Outside poverty, what other reason do you think make parents/guardians to send their children to trade?
- Did you trade when you were a child?
- Do you not think that, that may be one of the reason why you also send your children to trade? Because it is part of growing up.

Question 3. How have your child been affected by this trading?

Prompt:

- Have your child(ren) been affected in any way by this trading?
- Do you know of any child(ren) that has been affected by this work (If yes)
- How were they affected?
- What happened after?
- How were you able to address the issue?
- How was the child able to cope with the situation?
- How do you think the children's lives can be improved?

Question 4. To what extent do you know the right of your child?

Prompt:

- Are you aware of your child's rights?
- If yes, how did you know about it?
- And can you tell me some of those rights?
- If no, don't you think your child have rights?
- And those rights are very important in his/her life as s/he grows?

Question 5. What support would you like to have for yourself and your child so that you do not send him/her to trade anymore?

Prompt:

- How would you like your child to be supported?
- How would you like to be supported?

- If you are supported in anyway, will that change your mind about sending your child to trade?
- Do you think such support that you have suggested will also discourage other parents from sending their children to trade?
- *Do you have any other thing to say?*

APPENDIX 8: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS
SOCIAL WORKERS' DETAILS
Name:
Date of birth/age:
Job title:
Number of years in this post:
Telephone number:
e-mail address:
Receipt of signed consent form: YES/NO
Request to see transcripts of interview: YES/NO
Question 1. Introduction: How much of your work involves children that trade?
<p><i>Prompts:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you deal with the issue of child trading in your organization? • What has your organization put in place to monitor this trading activity? • How effective has this monitoring process been? • What has your organization put in place to safeguard the lives of these children? • How effective has it been working?
Question 2. What do you think is the reason behind children being sent to trade by their parents?
<p>Prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think parents send their children to trade? • Do you think there are cultural values of parents that may be contributing to their decisions in sending their children to trade? • If so, what are these values? • How have these values contributed to their decisions? • How have these values affected the children?

Question 3. How are these children affected by this activity?

Prompt:

- Have these children's lives been affected by this trading activity?
- How do you think they have been affected?
- How have you been able to interact with parents whose children are involved in this activity?
- How do you think the children's lives can be improved?
- What nature of assistance has been given to children who are involved in this activity and to their parents?

Question 4. How have parents and children been made aware of the rights of the child?

Prompt:

- How do you disseminate the child rights law to children and their parents?
- Are children and parents aware of this law?
- What steps have you taken in bringing the awareness to the children and their parents?
- Have your efforts yielded any positive outcome?
- What are the actions in place for violation of this law?
- How have these actions been effective?
- *Do you have any other thing to say?*